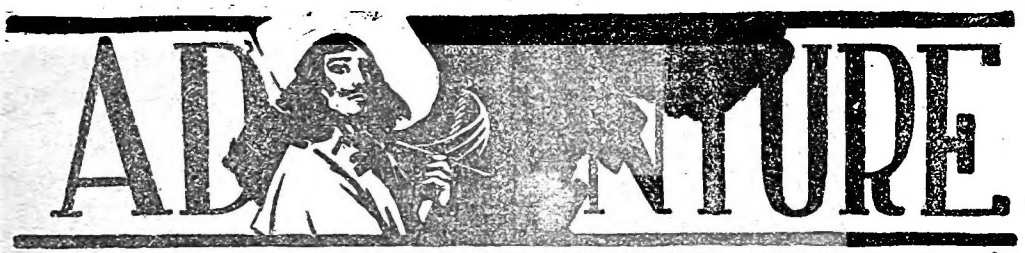
December
15 Cents
Adventure
YOUR OLD FRIENDS CAPTAIN KETTLE AND Mc TODD ARE INSIDE
A NEW CUTCLIFFE HYNE SERIAL

Inside Front Page
Missing



CONTENTS FOR DECEMBER 1911 VOL. 3 NO. 2

OF TEXAS
FEB 15 1943
THE LIBRARY

Cover Design	Lejaren Hiller	
The Marriage of Kettle. A Serial Story. I The Best and Newest of all the Captain Kettle Stories—A Tale of Kettle in his Younger Days and of the Equally Famous McTodd	C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne	191
Red Blood in Mexicali. A Story	Peter B. Kyne	208
Deepwater Strategy. A Story	Frederick William Wallace	218
The Door in the Wall. A Story A Sir John Hawkwood Story	Marion Polk Angellotti	225
The Tribute. A Story	Paul Crissey	234
My Adventures with Your Money—Who Got It—and How. VIII A Fight to the Death—The Dramatic Story of B. H. Scheftels & Co.	George Graham Rice	241
The. Host. A Poem	Wells Hastings	264
The Gratitude of "Army." A Story	Fred C. Kelly	265
The Madness of Bonnemaison. A Story	Nevil G. Henshaw	268
The Pretender. A Story	Rafael Sabatini	275
The Blooding of the Ninth Queen's Own. A Story	Talbot Mundy	281
Carney's Claim. A Story	Mary Markwell and Madge Macbeth	288
Wall Street and Sleepy Hollow. A Story How Jake Buchmuller Performed a Rescue	John A. Heffernan	291
Forbidden Treasure. A Serial Story. V A Tale of Adventure in Iceland	Beatrix Demarest Lloyd and Esher Martin	300
The Heroism of John Romanes. An Article	L. Warburton	313
The Adventure of the Leather Bag. A Story	George Barton	319
The Hate of Ismail Bey. A Story	Bertram Atkey	325
Wrecks of the Massachusetts Coast. An Article Heroic Battles of the Life-Saving Service	Percy M. Cushing	335
Protectors of the Peace. A Complete Novelette	Crittenden Marriott	342
Headings and Decorations	Lejaren Hiller	

Issued monthly. Yearly subscription, $1.50 in advance. Single copy, fifteen cents
Foreign postage, $1.00 additional. Canadian postage, 30 cents.

Trade-mark Registered; Copyright 1911 by The Ridgway Company in the United States and Great Britain

Published by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY
Erman J. Ridgway, President Wm. L. Jennings, Secretary and Treasurer
Spring & Macdougal Streets, New York City
5, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C., England
Entered at the New York Post-office as Second Class Matter

Digitized by Google

HE STANDS six feet three inches tall and his huge frame is well-knit and muscular. There is a knife-scar on his chin. His command of slang is amazing, and the slang itself is both vigorous and picturesque. He has been in typhoons and mutinies, on dangerous expeditions into the arctic regions and into the heart of Africa, in many adventures in many outlandish places and he has found his best weapon to be a "big, brown, ugly fist."

On the other hand he is founder of a horticultural society, a graduate of Cambridge, a governor of a deaf and dumb institute, a literary man and a recipient of prizes for raising raspberries and violets!

He makes a point of covering at least 10,000 miles of new ground every year. And when this big Englishman travels it isn't as a tourist nor along the beaten paths. He is much more likely to be working his passage on an ocean tramp or weathering gales in a fifteen-ton sloop or roughing it in some forsaken and remarkably unsafe corner of the world. And he raises violets and raspberries! Don't forget the violets and raspberries. Most adventurers don't raise them.

Rather an interesting man—yes?

Who is he?

Charles John Cutcliffe Wright Hyne.

In whom you will doubtless recognize the author of the famous stories of Captain Kettle and McTodd. His "Marriage of Kettle" begins just under your right thumb there, and it is one corking story. Dapper, fiery, masterful little Captain Kettle and the dry, hard-drinking and exceedingly efficient Scotch engineer McTodd, both in one story. Kettle in his younger days; his first meeting with McTodd. Also Captain Saturday Farnish and Miss Dubbs. I dare you to read the first paragraph!

SOMETIMES I wonder whether ADVENTURE'S readers have any idea how many of our stories are written by men who are themselves adventurers and who know whereof they speak. Hardly a day passes that one or another of these world wanderers doesn't come into the office and bring with him the salt tang of the sea, a glimpse of naked savages, or the faint echo of a rifle-shot in some far corner of the world that to most of us is a mere spot of color on the map or a name that conjures up visions as vague as they are alluring.

I used to cross my fingers at the strange tales they told me, and put my hand stealthily on the proverbial grain of salt. I wondered whether a good deal of their wanderings weren't in conversation only.

But gradually, after a good deal of proving up, I realized that with a few exceptions they were quite real and their talk quite true. And I found it added to the pleasure of reading a fiction-story laid, say, in South Africa, when I happened to know how many years the writer had spent there and could recognize incidents in his tale as things that really happened to himself.

Now an editor is only a reader who reads stories before they are printed. If he enjoyed knowing about the real adventurers behind the stories, why wouldn't you other readers enjoy it too? So we've started in to introduce them to you. Though this month it can be only a very brief meeting—about three inches long, my remaining space says.

TALBOT MUNDY, Peter B. Kyne and L. Warburton, for example, each with a story in this number. Shake hands quickly with Mr. Mundy—there is only time for me to whisper these words quickly in your ear: An Englishman—India, China, the Himalayas, Singapore, the Straits Settlements, Persian Gulf, the Boer War, Australia, Tasmania, Delagoa Bay and Lorenzo Marquez, British and German East Africa, elephant-hunting, pig-sticking, single-handed yachting, two campaigns against African tribes, sailing before the mast——

But here is Mr. Kyne, a native of San Francisco. He fought in the Philippines and he's going to tell you about himself in a future number. Meanwhile read "Red Blood in Mexicali."

Mr. Warburton is an Australian and at the tender age of fourteen was shooting at hostile natives with a gun that hurt his shoulder. He has covered a good deal of the world since then. One of his experiences he tells in this number.

Till next month, then, and a better acquaintance. And—I dare you to read the first paragraph on the next page!

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN.

Digitized by Google

Adventure

Registered in the United States Patent Office

VOL. 3
NO. 2

DEC.
1911

THE MARRIAGE OF KETTLE

BY C. J. CUTCLIFFE HYNE*

CHAPTER I

OWEN KETTLE, FIRST MATE

"YOU flat-footed Senegambian," said Mr. Kettle, the Mate, "if you drop any more of that green paint on my decks, I'll make you go down on your knock knees and lick them clean! I don't believe you ever saw a winch before, much less painted one. And you have the nerve to sign on here as A. B.!"

"I always accustomed, sar, to put on paint wid a brush. I don' consider a wad of waste a proper gennleman's tool."

"Answer me back, would you, you plum-colored son of a palm-nut? I'd like to point out just here—that I don't—allow—deck-hands—whether they be white, yellow, snuff and butter colored—or just plain black—to give me any back-talk—so long as I am Mr. Mate of this packet! And don't you—forget it!"

The sentence was punctuated with hard kicks bestowed by a neatly pipe-clayed shoe on any part of the huge, vicious-looking negro's anatomy that the little officer could reach. The man had drawn the knife from the sheath at the back of his belt, and was openly prepared for murder. But the Mate gave him no chance to use it. He chased him round the decks with such vigor and venom that the fellow could not turn round to strike, and when at last the man tripped over a steam-pipe, and the knife went flying, Mr. Kettle, instead of pitching it overboard, kicked it contemptuously back to its owner.

*See opposite page.

Copyright, 1911, by The Ridgway Company. All rights reserved

Digitized by Google

"There's your knife. Put it back in its sheath, or I'll smash you some more. And now get back to your work."

"Yes, sar."

"Understand how to lay on paint with a wad of waste?"

"Yes, sar."

"Get ahead then!"

The negro painted with diligence and skill, leaving the surface he touched a fine rasping green, with no superfluous paint that would subsequently run and grow ropy, and cutting clean straight lines at his edges. It is a high art to paint accurately with a wad of cotton-waste, and many men, including the house painter, have it not. But steamer tradition says that the African negro when he paints shall not use a brush, and the sea sumptuary laws are severe. So the negro is forced to learn the skill of his hands with the homelier instrument.

"Mr. Kettle?"

"Sir?" The Mate looked aft to the upper bridge and beheld there the blowsy head and still blowsier tobacco pipe of Captain Saturday Farnish.

"Will you come to the chart-house a minute?"

"Aye, aye, sir."

The inside of the S.S. *Norman Tower's* chart-house smelt of clothes and varnish. Its walls were decorated with a shelf of professional works, an oil painting of the *Norman Towers* in impossible colors on an impossible sea from the brush of an Eastern artist, and the cabinet portrait of a large pleasant-faced lady in bursting satins, this last being Mrs. Saturday Farnish.

Captain Farnish lowered himself into a large red velvet armchair, which lurched dangerously as it met his weight.

"That starboard castor off again," he grumbled. "Chips must have mended it five times this trip alone."

"The carpenter's inefficient, sir," said his chief officer stiffly. "He needs keeping up to his job. If you'll let me take him in hand, I'll undertake he does the thing thoroughly this time. I'll make him a good carpenter, sir, if you'll let me have the handling of him. I could make the *Towers* look a different boat, sir, by the time we reach Liverpool, if you'd let me have full use of the carpenter."

"And never have him come near the old packet again? No, you don't, Mr. Kettle, me man. I've had Chips sailing with me six years now, and I like him. He's idle, but he understands the boat, and he's got a neat trick with that penny whistle."

"He can blow tunes out of that whistle," the chief officer admitted grudgingly, "and that's a fact. But as a carpenter he's a holy fraud. Look here, sir, if you want a smart ship——"

"I don't. I want a comfortable one. What's the clock? Five-and-twenty to twelve. Dash my whiskers! But that's five minutes after the time for my 'morning.'"

HE got up, took a whisky-bottle and tumbler from inside the folding washstand, and poured himself out an accurate three fingers, holding the glass to the light so as to be sure of the measure. He added water to within a finger's breadth of the top, drank a third of the mixture, and resumed his seat with a sigh, glass in hand.

"That just gets to the spot where my old fever left a hole. I hope you will always enjoy good health, Mr. Kettle, me man, and not want a 'morning,' till you're master of your own ship and have a mate to do the work for you. If you stick to Horner's Perfect Cure, that Mrs. Farnish brought you up on, you'll have little to complain of in the way of internal trouble."

"Thank you, sir, I'm pretty regular. I put in my two doses of Horner every week, and reap the benefit. As for a 'morning,' a chief officer's pay on a tramp simply won't run to it, if he takes a bottle of beer with his dinner."

"Especially if he wants to save up for his evenings ashore when he feels it's up to him to give the girls a treat." Captain Farnish winked a damp eye. "Pretty little piece that you were trotting round Cathedral Square in Vera Cruz, Owen, me man."

The Mate laughed. "She was giving me Spanish lessons, sir. But I didn't know we met you."

"I was sitting under the Hotel Diligencia piazza, having a social glass with the boss stevedore. There was a little matter of a bit of cumshaw which it seems you were too proud to take——"

"I accept charity from no man."

"Well, I'm not so stuck up, and when Miss Right comes along, and you marry and have a houseful of youngsters, you'll stuff notes into your pocketbook when they're offered, me man. Not that I blame you for sparking the señorita. I've danced 'em round myself when I was your age, and was

Digitized by Google

a fine buck mate with a bran'-new master's ticket aching to be used. I wore long side-whiskers then, and the girls thought 'em awfully fetching."

Captain Farnish chuckled till he had to wipe away the reminiscent tear with the broad back of his hand. "Fetching, by gad! I should think I was. But you've heard the old woman tuning up on that string when she's been mad with me."

"Yes, sir," said the Chief Officer respectfully, "and I took a note of it at the time for future reference."

Each caught the other's eye, and laughed. Owen Kettle was the son of Captain Farnish's old skipper, and after the old man went down with his ship in the China Seas the Farnishes had brought up the boy with their own children. Mrs. Farnish ruled that household with a rod of malacca, and during Captain Saturday Farnish's brief spells ashore, when his tongue had been lubricated into indiscretions, he often received stripes even in the bosom of his family, as all Merseyside Terrace, Birkenhead, knew full well, to its grim amusement.

Even now the narrow house in the narrow street across the river at Liverpool was the only place that Kettle considered as home throughout all the marches of the universe, and though the chance of service had thrown him on to the *Norman Towers* as chief officer to his own foster-father, and though they addressed each other by those formal titles that the hard and fast etiquette of the sea sets out in its rubrics, there remained under the surface much of the old careless, if undefined, affection.

"Well," said Captain Farnish, "as the old woman isn't here to object (God bless her!), and we seem to have made a goodish run, I think I'll repeat the prescription. You might make it up, me man. It'll be practise for you when you have a ship of your own and have to know how to pour out whisky without overloading the dose. And put the bottle back on its shelf, and shut the washstand, so's my steward isn't tempted. Well, here's——"

But Captain Farnish's genial toast remained unvoiced, and he sat back heavily in the big broken-springed velvet chair, with the beverage slopping over the edge of his tumbler.

Kettle followed his gaze. Framed in the brass ring of a port was the bilious white face of Mr. Andrew Little, the Chief Engineer, and in front of it the black and damnatory forefinger of Mr. Little pointing to the tumbler.

"At it again," muttered the Mate. And then, as the face and the finger whisked away, "Shall I go and attend to him?" he asked.

"No, no, me man, thank you all the same. He'll pull round if we give him time."

"He'll be ramping round the decks preaching hell-for-sinners for any grinning idiot who comes to hear, inside ten minutes. His latest craze is that all who do not starve themselves are doomed to perdition. Fancy an officer, even though he be an engineer, telling that to a gang of old sailors who are ramping to get their full Board of Trade of whack! Don't think it's good for the Chief's insides to be allowed the run of his tongue when these luny fits come on him, and I'm certain it's bad for the discipline of the ship."

"Very difficult thing to coerce a chief engineer, as you'll learn, Mr. Kettle, me man, when you get a ship of your own. You can't send him to his room without entering the circumstance in the log, and that means wasting time over explanations at the office ashore when you might be sitting with your wife at a music hall. My motto's always try for the line of least resistance."

"Mr. Little's dangerous."

"Very likely, Mr. Kettle, me man, very likely. But I tackle trouble when it comes. I don't go and hunt for it like you do, and it's astonishing how much one slips out of if one follows that principle. There's that black, for instance, that you were stubbing your toe against half an hour ago."

"He's a bad one, that, bone idle, and saucy as a German baron. But I'll make him into a good dog before I'm through."

"Did he ever try to knife you before?"

"Only twice that I could be sure of."

"Then why in thunder didn't you fling his weapon over into the ditch when you had it there lying on the deck before you?"

"Because I intended to show the swine I wasn't afraid of him."

"I believe you really like trouble."

The little Mate sighed. "I'm afraid I do, sir."

"I wonder where you got your taste from. It couldn't be from your upbringing. I'm sure you never got a hankering for trouble from either me or the old woman, though

Digitized by Google

when one comes to think of it, your pore father——"

"Yes, sir?"

"Well, he was Welsh, Owen, me man, and we'll leave it at that. But I will say that at any rate there's nothing of the thief about you, and I never caught you in a lie in all your life—— Well, Mr. Mate, don't let me keep you from your duty."

With which formal dismissal Captain Saturday Farnish drank the balance of his whisky and water, closed his eyes, opened his mouth, and was promptly asleep.

The smart, keen chief officer stepped out into the sunshine and went from place to place on the seedy, undermanned steamer about his many duties, walking crisply, talking crisply, getting a maximum of work done with the limited means at his disposal. They were voyaging from Vera Cruz to Liverpool; had passed out of the Gulf Stream through the Bahamas, south of the island of Abaoo, by that channel known to the Western Ocean sailor-folk as the Hole in the Wall; and were well out in the Sargasso Sea.

CHAPTER II

NO COAL

SO FAR as the eye could see the only thing that floated on the turquoise blue swells were bunches of orange-yellow weed. The steamer's rusty black bows sawed regularly up and down, always pushing a crumbling cascade of white water ahead of her. In sea phrase she carried a good bone in her teeth, and in and out of this played iridescent flying-fish of the bigness and shape of dragon-flies. Other flying-fish like silver rats skimmed along the sleek blue hollows of the swells and plunged with a splash into the next uprearing hillside. And astern and overhead seven gulls held steady station, and could be depended on to keep convoy till the gulls on the Azores beat met them in the wastes of mid-ocean and took over relief.

On to the top of the fiddley a grimy fireman presently clambered, one corner of his sweat-rag between his teeth, and slewed round a ventilator to catch more breeze.

A deck-hand who was setting up funnel-stays turned his head. "That's the fourth time you ash-cats have been up here messing with the ventilators this watch. And the wind's not shifted half a point. Is it a game?"

"It's a mighty poor game. We're firing on the sweepings of the bunkers, and it's horses' work to keep steam in her."

"Well, it's your job, not mine, praise the Lord, but it's struck me before that your old coffee-mill's not running her usual revolutions. Just give the Chief my kind duty, and say I'll be glad if he'll broach a new bunker and give you some good hard coal to fire on. You're blowing all this sludge clean out of the stack, and it drops on our decks, and it's up to us to sweep it into the ditch. You may tell him to—— Whisht! There's the Mate."

The fireman stumped off down steel ladders out of sight, the deck-hand worked with intense application at setting up his funnel-stay, and Mr. Kettle, the Mate, went below to bring up his sextant for the midday sight. The beat of the engines certainly was slacking. He wondered why. The reason would have to be entered up under "distance run according to engine-room reckoning," when the Chief handed in his day's report, and even easy-going Captain Saturday Farnish could not avoid officially commenting upon it. But it was no affair of the deck officer's, and Kettle dropped it from his mind. He was always a very keen stickler for the rigid steamer etiquette which states that the engine-room shall not meddle with the deck, and the deck shall have no truck with the engine staff except for purely deck purposes.

So the *Norman Towers'* chief officer took his sextant from its box in the rack over his berth, gave it a rub over with its own piece of wash-leather—he was a very natty man about his utensils—went out on deck, and gave a warning knock at the chart-house door.

"Five minutes to noon, sir."

The elderly Second Mate, who couldn't have worked out a sight if his life had depended on it, was looking wise over his instrument and fiddling with the smoked glasses; the smart young school-bred Third was nervously fidgeting away to make sure the sun did not play tricks on him by making a sudden lunge downward before he brought it to the horizon; and then out shambled Captain Farnish, blowsy and slippered, and put up his sextant also, like the practised old man of the sea he was.

All four of them solemnly stared, working the vernier screws each according to his

Digitized by Google

temperament, and then Farnish went in to his chronometer and gave out the Greenwich time. The mates went below to work out the reckoning (which the Second, by the way, laboriously copied from Kettle) and in due time these were handed into the chart-house, and from them Captain Farnish marked up on the chart the *Norman Towers'* position on the face of the waters. He never worked out the figures for himself. As he said, he knew a good mate when he saw one, and it helped a lad on to give him a bit of responsibility. And after this it was his custom to add another ten minutes' sleep to the short doze he had already enjoyed, so as to have a quarter of an hour's rest to the good before dinner.

But this day a portent was showing itself that even his easy-going temperament could not afford to overlook. The engines had long since dropped that steady, uniform *rub-a-rumble, rub-a-rumble* that a steamer's engines should keep up from port to port (or at any rate from soundings to soundings) and were giving forth that labored *kick-and-a-cough* one hears only in narrow waters and crowded traffic. And even this was slowing down.

Further, there was obvious trouble among the engine-room staff. The slender watches of firemen and trimmers were bunched on the fiddley top; the second and fourth engineers, both very young men, both pasty-faced, were standing outside the engine-room door in the port alleyway, openly perturbed, obviously ignorant of what to do next.

The Second Mate discovered it was his watch below and dived there like a rabbit; Number Three was watch-officer on the bridge; but Kettle instinctively closed up on his Captain. There was something in his nature that always forced him to get close to the storm-center when trouble brewed.

"I DON'T like it, Mr. Kettle, me man," Captain Farnish kept on saying, "I don't like it at all. That infernal Mr. Little has been at some of his mad tricks again, and scared all those ash-cats out of their greasy lives. If I send for the fellow, and he's one of those luny fits on him, he'll preach offensively to me on the need of fasting, and it'll mean a row; and if I don't send for him he'll as like as not keep us rolling on here till I do send for him, and that'll take some explaining at Liverpool; and between you and me, Mr. Kettle, me man, I'm in a devil of a fix."

The chief officer said "Yes, sir," which was all he could say. For any underling to give advice unless asked for to a ship's captain would probably bring about a cyclone there and then whilst the words were being uttered.

"Let me see. Did I have my 'morning'?"

"Yes, sir."

"H'm, perhaps better not have a second before dinner. I wish that infernal Chief would get an expert to wrestle with his soul ashore, instead of bringing such useless dunnage as an out-o'-repair soul to sea, the blooming, crazy nuisance! I ought to have sent him to hospital at Vera Cruz, but it would have meant a lot of letter-writing, and cabling, and signing a stack of Consular papers. I hate signing papers; you never know what they let you in for. Besides, you know what the Firm is; if I'd got rid of Little, as likely as not they'd have saddled me with one of these new-fangled Chiefs who'd want to go shares in my legitimate profits. You take it from me, Mr. Kettle, me man, they're swine, these new technical school engineers."

"Yes, sir."

"I don't like to send for him, but I suppose I'd better hear what he has to say. Could you—er—just get him into the chart-house here, Mr. Kettle?"

"Yes, sir, I understand. Quite informally. Better not send a message. I'll go for him myself."

"That's the idea, Mr. Kettle, me man, and bring him back yourself, and then stand by whilst we talk."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The Mate walked briskly out and made for the two white-faced juniors who were standing at the engine-room door.

"The Chief's in his room," said one of them. "My God, Kettle, he means death for every man on board!"

"Oh, don't worry your small head about that," said the Mate confidently. "The Old Man's quite competent to attend to Mr. Little and the ship, too."

The Chief Engineer's room was just inside the door and stood at the head of the ladder leading to the depths of the engine room below, and at this moment the man himself appeared. He was stark naked, his face drawn and white, his body thin as an Indian fakir's. He had a cook's broad meat-ax

Digitized by Google

in his hand, and his lips were drawn back from his teeth like those of a snarling dog.

The Mate delivered his message as though such a get-up was the most ordinary uniform of shipboard life.

"Captain Farnish sends his compliments, sir, and would be glad to see you in the chart-house."

"Stand out of my path!"

"At once, sir," he said.

"Stand aside."

"Perhaps, if you're not feeling very well this morning, sir, you would allow me to take your arm."

The madman rushed and made a vicious slash with his ax. Kettle dodged, and the blow skimmed his sleeve. Then, with the lightning quickness of a man who had been used all his life to rough-and-tumble fighting, he jumped for the engineer and tried to trip him to the deck. But he could get no hold. Mr. Little had rubbed himself from head to foot with oil till he was as slippery as an eel, and moreover he had all of a madman's strength.

Kettle found himself slimed from top to toe and flung violently against the iron side of the house, and Little raced away forward, ax in hand.

"For God's sake let him go!" said the Second Engineer. "And let's hope he jumps overboard. He's as good as murdered the whole lot of us!"

"What do you mean? Has he put dynamite in your coffee-mill down there or something? Here you, both of you: if there's anything wrong with the engines get below at once and put it straight!"

But the engineers did not move. "It's worse than that," said the spokesman gloomily. "He's done us in the eye over the coal. He made us believe there were two more bunkers full, easily enough for the run home to Liverpool, and like —— fools we believed him. You see we only joined at Vera Cruz. He'd run all his engineers and stokehold crew out of the ship, because —well because——"

"Oh, get a move on you!"

"Well, there isn't half a ton of coal left on the boat, and we're in the loneliest part of all the lonely seas, and here I guess we'll stay till we rot! There isn't one chance in ten thousand of any steamer turning up that could tow us into port or even take us off. . . . My God! look at that bubbly yellow weed over the side there!"

CHAPTER III

MR. KETTLE'S STRATEGY

"THIS," said Captain Saturday Farnish, "is the end of me professionally. I shaln't be able to keep up my insurance, and if I die, it will mean workhouse for the old woman." He tried to steady himself for a moment, and then hiccoughed behind his hand. "I shall apply for a chapel-keeper's job with the Calvinistic Methodists when I get ashore. It's about what I'm fit for, and they ought to give it me if attendance and subscriptions are remembered in one's favor."

"Oh, things will come all right, sir, at the office when they're explained," said the Mate. "You aren't a doctor. You can't be responsible for Mr. Little going off his head."

"When you have been at sea longer, Owen, me man, you'll understand that a shipmaster is expected to be doctor, lawyer, commercial agent, and clerk of the weather, and if he fails at any one of those jobs or at forty others when they come along, he's sacked (although he may have been with the firm for forty years), and there are ten men waiting in the outer office ready to take on his billet for less pay. It's a dog'sh life, the sea, Owen, me man, and on a voyage one is seldom able to get a full whack of sleep. That remindsh me; I think I'll just have a peg and 'ndulge 'n a few minutes' snoosh. 'S nothing else to be done. Presently when we begin to starve I 'spose I shall have to stand round and see the men don't eat one another."

"There's Mr. Little, sir, on the forecross-trees. Any message, sir?"

Captain Farnish looked drearily at the broken castor of his easy chair, and tried without success to stifle another hiccough. "If I could only get the beggar to his room."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the Mate briskly, "I'll tell him you order him to go there." And with that betook himself to the outer deck, and closed the chart-house door on the hook behind him.

On the main deck below there were gathered the whole of the *Norman Towers'* company—mates, engineers, the cook, the baker, stewards, the lampman, boatswain, the idle carpenter, the grimy trimmers and firemen, the all-nation deck-hands; and high up on the steamer's drag foremast, perched ridic-

Digitized by Google

ulously on the clumsy iron crosstrees, the white, naked body of the Chief Engineer stood out vividly against the cobalt of the midday sky. He was preaching to the congregation in an elaborate conventicle voice, and they, with the seafarers' susceptibility to sudden hot religious influences, were listening with straining ears.

Mr. Kettle the Mate ran crisply down the ladder. "Clear a gangway here, you sons of fools!" he ordered sharply. And then, "Forecrosstress there! Captain's orders, sir; will you go to your room at once?"

By not so much as the flicker of an eyelash did the madman show that he had heard the interruption. He mouthed on with his discourse. The sun staring from the hot sky above was already beginning to scorch the skin of his white back to an angry pink. "Fast, I tell you," he thundered down at his listeners, "fast if ye would find salvation; and that there shall be no backslider I, even I, have thrust fasting upon you. There is food left upon this ship, yea, and drink also, both strong and otherwise, such as may endure for the space of two weeks, and after that wo, wo to the man that shall not take to fasting with prayer and freewill! Hell shall have him hungry!"

"Just because you can't do arithmetic accurately, Mr. Little," said the Mate acidly, "we may starve, and men may die, but each one will have to report, wherever he lands at, that he's got there because of an engineer who's incompetent at his job."

"I'm as capable at my profession as any engineer on all the seas! I accept criticism from no brass-edged cargo-tallier whatever, and I'll baptize you with blood, my son, when I've finished attending to the heathen! Wherefore listen, all ye that are still unregenerate and addicted to gluttony. Fast, I say unto you, fast from this day onwards whilst food is still around you, and abstinence is not forced upon you by famine and the greater reward in the hereafter shall be yours——"

"Mr. Little, there is no getting over the fact of your incompetence. I've seen the evidence of it myself in your own shaky handwriting, and signed by your own name. Now you'll agree with me that no man that had ever been taught to write could scrawl as illiterate a signature as yours."

The madman lifted his ax and was evidently in half a mind to throw it—which was what Mr. Kettle the Mate was angling for. But the wandering eyes of his congregation drew him back.

"O ye of little concentration," he shouted, "by what loose threads are your bits of souls tethered! By a skirt ye are led ashore, by a small-sized mate ye are driven at sea, and me ye will not attend to, yea, though I offer ye salvation! But by the sun above that now scorches me, *ego, vos procedens*, will drag you after me to Paradise."

"You couldn't do it," said the Mate. "You're as incompetent either to lead or to drive in the straight path as you are to make out an accurate estimate of distance run and coal remaining in bunkers. Man, there's no getting over the evidence of your own daily engine-room reports. They'd disgrace a bigamist, sailing his first trip in a Dago tramp's stokehold. They——"

"*Whiz!*" came the ax, winking as it span downward through the southern sunlight. The Mate dodged it deftly and it skated along the decks between two shrinking lines of men. Then, plucking a greenheart belayingpin from the rail, he ran forward and swung himself into the forerigging.

He went up the ratlines at racing speed, and the naked man on the crosstrees leaped to his feet and stood balancing there with one hand on the starboard topmast shroud, swaying to the roll of the ship.

"You are bringing me food!" he screamed. "You shall not make me lose my high-class soul by forcing me to break my fast! I will swim to Liverpool, and report you to the Board of Trade!" And with that, waiting cannily till the *Norman Towers* rolled to starboard, and the deep blue of the Sargasso Sea lay beneath him, he jumped outward and dived feet foremost.

Mr. Kettle's action was prompt enough. Even while the madman was in mid-air, he hailed the officer of the watch to lower away the starboard quarter-boat. Then slipping quickly down himself, he ran across the decks and looked over the rail. He knew that Mr. Little could swim, and only wished to reassure himself that he had not been stunned by his dive.

THE *Norman Towers* had lost her weigh by this time, and lay in the trough of the great blue ocean swells, leaking a thin trickle of steam. The spot where the engineer had hit the water was marked by a patch of white which bubbled like soda-water. Mr. Kettle jumped to

Digitized by Google

the rail and stood there poised. He was a poor man and always a dandy about his dress, and as he had a cat's dislike for getting his clothes wet or soiled, he did not want to jump overboard and spoil a suit which he could ill afford to replace, unless the engineer plainly showed that he wanted assistance. So when the man's white face appeared and he spat out a mouthful of weed and water and set off swimming at a sturdy sidestroke for the northeast, the Mate sang out an ironical "Good voyage," and went to the upper deck to oversee the lowering of the quarter-boat.

The davits swung outboard, the tackles squeaked like a parcel of angry cats, the boat splashed into the water, unhooked and pushed off. Oars straddled out from her and beat the water unevenly. Slowly she scratched her way over the hill and dale of sea. The Engineer, when he heard the clank of the looms against the thole-pins, swam to the farther side of an islet of the orange-yellow weed, and it looked as if they were going to have trouble with him. But words passed in the boat, and one of the rowers shipped his oar and stood up. He picked up some small line which lay on the untidy floorboards, made a running bowline on one end, arranged some coils to his satisfaction, threw, and hauled taut. The man caught the Engineer round the neck with his first heave, and (after the severe methods of the sea) choked the fight out of him before he brought him up through the clogging, bubbly weed to the side of the boat. Thereafter the madman was brought on board, dried, dressed, and deposited in his own room, the door of which a leisurely carpenter proceeded to decorate with hasp and padlock.

The Mate marched smartly off to the chart-house to report. He knocked, lifted the hook and opened the door, and grasped the situation at a glance; Captain Saturday Farnish had indulged in that one more peg —and several others to ram it home.

The Mate stepped inside, and this time shut the door closely. He drew curtains across the side windows that the curious might not look through, and then made his formal report.

"Chief Engineer gone to his room, sir."

"You're a very capable off'sr—Owen, me man. Given you a most unpleas-ant job, I'm sure. Been with you in spirit all along, but couldn't get on deck. Detained chart-house severe malarial symptoms. Fatal, expose them sea air. Stayed in here very much against my will taking neshessary drugs."

"Yes, sir, quite so. Second engineer reports it's quite true about the coal. I told him it was a trifle which would cost him his ticket, and as he was saucy I had to attend to him. But that doesn't get over the coal—and the grub. One we haven't got, the other we'll have less of every day."

"'Nless you can arrange for the seagulls to bring bath buns, like, wasn' it Joshua did, for the ravens?"

"My idea, sir, was that you'd like me to rig a life-boat and go off, and see if I couldn't pick up assistance. I was sure you'd think each moment was of importance, as every bit of delay means so much more food and drink consumed, and you'd want me to be off at once."

"But where to, Owen, me man? You're not likely to find boat to tow us thish side New Jerusalem."

"There's some sort of a steam lane from the Northern Ports to the West Indies about twelve degrees south of where we are now, sir, and I concluded you'd like me to sail down to cut that, and then if I didn't see anybody, hold on backwards and across till I did."

"You couldn't find the old packet again, once you'd left her. Much better stay 'n let's all starve comfortably together."

"I shall take note of the current sets and the wind from day to day, sir, and shall'n't be far out in calculating your drift. They rub that sort of thing pretty well into one in the navigation school. I think you may expect me back with assistance inside a week."

CAPTAIN FARNISH applied a handkerchief to his eyes. "You'll excuse these tears. Owen, me man, but propsect mosht distressful. I always looked forward high-class funeral Birkenhead Cemetery, with you and the old woman and the kids in the wake of the hearse, a sort of poem in white pocket-handkerchiefs and crape. 'S been one of the happy dreams of my life. Mosht distressing die out here like a black beetle in a kerosene can, unmourned, unwept for. And my steward tells me whisky's running out."

"Yes, sir, the *Towers's* going to be a dry ship till I get back with relief. Then I may take it to be your wish that I should get under weigh at once?"

Digitized by Google

"At onche," said Captain Farnish with much gravity. "Scheme I've outlined to you, Mr. Kettle me—Mr. Kettle, me man, is outcome much anxious delib—dolab—I should say de-lib-er-ashun, and I have full confidence your ability carry it out. Full confidence. I may say fullest. Though shuffering severe attack malarious shymptoms myself, as *vide* entry in log, still I have fullest confidence in Mate of my own upbringing"—Captain Farnish's head dropped upon his breast, and he permitted himself to snore with relief.

"Then good-by, sir."

"Goo-by. I wasn' asleep, if that's your idea, and to prove it I give you las' word. My motto is 'Leave everything to the Mate. Remarkably confident—I should say compet-ent man, my mate, Mis' Ke'll'. As I said before, goo'-by."

The big red velvet armchair in which Captain Saturday Farnish reposed jarred up and down on its broken castor with every roll of the ship, and, before leaving, the Mate took down Norie's "Epitome of Navigation" from the bookshelf and shored the chair up on to a steady base. Then he set his watch by the ship's chronometer and went out once more on deck and gave crisp and lucid commands to those concerned for the rigging and victualling of the port life-boat.

His last action before leaving was to change the uniform that the Chief Engineer had slimed with oil for a fresh rig. It is not many men who would have given thought for their clothes before starting on an open-boat voyage in mid-Atlantic, which could only be classed as desperate, but I can merely report Mr. Kettle as I found him.

The Mate's choice of crew for the life-boat was also typical of the man. Skill would be needed for the trip—strength, endurance, and above all things obedience. And yet Mr. Kettle, knowing to the full the weakness of every member of the *Norman Towers'* complement, deliberately picked as his associates the five worst men on board. He even included the black who only that morning had tried to knife him.

I could never extract from Kettle the reason for this selection, and so can only surmise. Two theories occur to me. Perhaps he took away those particular rapscallions with him in the boat so that there should be no chance of their annoying poor, weak old Farnish on the *Norman Towers*. Perhaps he took them to enjoy the risk and luxury of taming them at close quarters. Indeed both considerations must have weighed with him. But I believe it was the last that swayed him most. He was always a man with a singular taste for what he called "trouble."

When the life-boat was ready Mr. Kettle looked up at the row of worried faces that stared down at him from the steamer's rail, gave a curt wave, and ordered his men to shove off.

"And now," said he, "do any of you farmers know how to sail a boat?"

It appeared that none of them did. They were steamer sailors all of them, able to drive a winch, paint and clean paint, take a wheel, or rig a derrick.

"Well," said the Mate with an unkind grin, "I'll teach you, and when you next step ashore, if ever you get there, you'll be smart enough fore-and-afters to sail as deckhands in an *America Cup* race. But, dead or alive, you've just one use at present—and that's as ballast. Pile yourselves up to windward!"

They did it sullenly.

"You with the bald head there, smile! D'ye hear me, you son of a can-opener? Smile, or by James I'll knock your yellow teeth down your throat! Don't you dare to throw black looks at me! Now we'll just call watches. I'm captain, and I'll take the port. Jenkins, as you've the only clean face at your end of the boat, I'll appoint you chief officer, and you take the starboard watch. Let me see, I'll give you the Dutchman, and Baldy here, with the winning smile. And that leaves me Olsen and the Senegambian who still thinks he's going to get that pig-knife of his into my ribs before we're through with this boat trip. Well, Mr. Jenkins, as we're shipping a good deal of water you can set your starbowlines to bail, and the port watch can shake out a reef. She'll carry a bit more canvas, if she's humored, and time's the essence of the contract just now if we're to save the *Towers*."

CHAPTER IV

THE VOYAGE OF THE STARBOARD LIFE-BOAT

RAPIDLY the disabled steamer dipped out of sight behind them below the sierra of the horizon, and presently they had the heaving circus of ocean to themselves.

Digitized by Google

Great orange-yellow islets of the Sargasso weed sprawled here and there over the rich blue of the water, and these, when possible, they avoided; iridescent flying-fish scuttered along beside them and before their bows; and astern a brace of seafowl, which had detached themselves from the steamer's convoy, kept accurate station. The blackguardly crew found something vaguely disquieting in the presence of these birds, and at first observed their coming with gloomy silence, and then with articulate grumblings.

"Not here for nothing, them birds," said Baldhead. "They know a thing or two. It isn't for galley scraps they're following this boat."

"Dey say dose gulls is de ghosts of ole sailors trowned at sea," said Olsen. "I vonders vhat it feels like to fly?"

"They picks yo' eyes out befo' yo' daid," said the Carolina black. "I sho' don' like the neb of that bird dere to stabboard. He's mos' as big's a Tampico turkey-buzzard."

A puff of squall poured down against them and Kettle luffed not an inch, but kept the boat rigidly on her course. The wave-tops (as he intended) poured in over the lee gunwale.

"Bail, you sinful malingerers!" he bawled at them. "Bail, and keep your legs dry and the ship afloat! I'll attend to your souls when the time comes. Mr. Jenkins, you come aft and take the lee tiller beside me. You've got to learn to handle the boat some time, and a nice light breeze like this is just the time to begin. There you are. Now you've got her all by your shivering self, and mind you keep her ramping full. Don't you dare to luff for a foot of wave-top."

The men were scared and sullen, and the method of their schooling was brutal, but they improved hour by hour. There was a spare tiller in the boat, a lusty cudgel of oak, and this the Mate used vigorously over their heads and shoulders whenever they were slow, or dense, or in any way short of the perfect seaman. Discipline was carried on big-ship fashion. They fed at appointed hours on a sparing ration; they drank lime-juice in their musty water, as ordained by the British Board of Trade; and bells were struck every half-hour on a tin bucket with ding-dong regularity.

Twice they passed derelicts stuck in the Sargasso eddy. The first was a steamboat, with only her forepart showing, green with sea grasses. The other was a four-masted schooner, spruce with new paint, obviously a new arrival. Here was a sea mystery that would have tempted the most incurious. Here also would be some very obvious pickings. But the crew were by this time under a good discipline and did no more than look longingly at her. They rose her over the horizon, drove past her, and dropped her under the horizon astern; and as Mr. Kettle the Mate made no suggestion of boarding, no one else dared to voice a hint in that direction.

They made their southing and got to the far side of the steam lane without seeing smoke or spar of traffic, and then, after beating tediously back and forth for another day, were overtaken by a gale which was too heavy for even the Mate's hard daring to carry sail in. He held on, it is true, till his men were three parts dead with terror, and then with his boat half water-logged, rounded her to and rode out the breeze to a sea-anchor of spars.

Twice during this blow they saw steamers to windward of them heading for the Islands, and three brine-washed boats plunging eastward, but all were out of hail, or, what is more to the point, made no response to any signals Mr. Kettle or his men could fly.

Rain pelted down on them during the squalls, and they caught it in the sails and decanted the grimy brackish proceeds into their water-beakers. Flying-fish blew on board in the spindrift and they ate these raw and wished there were more of them. And once a brace of bonitas followed the smaller fry, and they gorged on these and for once were pleasantly filled. The small amount of food from the *Norman Towers* had run out by this time, and they were all looking thin and miserable and wolfish.

When once more the gale eased, and the boat, under snugged-down canvas, was again thrashing her way up to the steam lane which now lay to the northward, the crew were unwise enough to plan mutiny. They collected up forward and put their heads together, and from amongst them presently came Jenkins, half shamefaced, half defiant, and sat down aft.

"I stand by you, sir," he said to the Mate.

"Of course," said Kettle. "You have to, since I made you an officer. And it will be good practise for you, though if I had been put to it I could have handled the whole outfit without straining myself."

The others heard, and their courage oozed;

Digitized by Google

and when it came to the point they put as a request what they had intended to dish up as a command.

THEY were hungry, thirsty, miserable; the Sargasso was a desert; they were one and all covered with salt-water boils; provisions and water were all gone; and presently they would all die, and the boat would blow about on that unkind sea, a water-logged derelict full of corpses. If they ran for the nearest land, which would offer food, drink, shelter, warmth, they might yet escape with bare life. But it must be now, without a moment's delay . . . now . . . now.

Baldhead was the speaker. He was quite a young man with a fine emotional touch to his oratory.

"Quite finished?" the Mate enquired when he had talked himself to a standstill.

"Yes, sir, that is what we have to say."

"And you said it very well. I wish I'd brought along the accordion. I should like to set that tale to music and hear you sing it—you son of a play-actress. You're overfed and underworked, that's what's the matter with you! You're spoiling for the want of a job, and by James, I'm the man to give you one! This boat wants smartening up. So to begin with, you take your knife and scrape spars. The Senegambian, who has also a knife which he's aching to use, will help you. Now jump, you sweep, or by the living James I'll knock more stars out of you with the tiller than ever were stuck up in the sky!"

They jumped. The others, unbidden, set about coiling ropes and cleaning the floor-boards of unconsidered trifles of litter, and Mr. Kettle the Mate watched proceedings with an acid smile.

The men were all hollow-eyed and, with the exception of Baldhead, shaggy beyond belief. The hair of the rest had grown to an incredible length. Their beards bristled uncouthly. Their cheeks were streaked salt-white in the wrinkles. Their clothes, shabby and darned and rotten to start with, were shrunk and sea-bleached, and moreover torn to fantastic, fluttering rags. The men had no heart for patching and mending on that desperate boat voyage.

Even Mr. Kettle, the usually immaculate Mate, was little better than the others. The blue serge of his uniform was so impregnated with salt that no hand-brushing would unbleach it; the brass buttons and gold lace were tarnished to a dingy green; a pocket was torn and dangled limply, and in more places than one threads had rotted and the seams gaped. But worst of all were his cheeks and chin. These it had been his pride to shave "a day below." He had brought a razor with him in the boat, wrapped in an oiled rag to shelter it from rust. But the scouring of the seas had been too much for the flimsy safeguard. The boat was sodden with sea-water for days together, and the blade succumbed to the brine. Its surface discolored; its edge grew gapped till to use it meant gory torment; and finally it refused even the semblance of duty. Mr. Kettle cursed and flung it savagely into a pursuing wave-crest. And thereafter red bristles sprouted over his haggard face, and he loathed the sight of himself whenever he used the inside of his watch case as a mirror when he combed his hair.

Baldhead at these moments of the toilet felt that he got a little of his own back. He would rub his smooth cheeks and chin, and smile thoughtfully at the horizon; and although the Mate was quick to resent his insolence in practical shape, Baldhead always licked his salt-cracked lips appreciatively when the chance came round for his little play.

Luck, in the way of picking up a steamboat, was certainly hard with them; but luck decidedly came to their aid more than once when starvation seemed certain. I have mentioned the full meal they had on the big bonitas. Another day the impossible happened and their two attendant sea fowl altered course too suddenly, steered into each other, and dropped disabled into the water. Their bodies were eaten down to the last fiber, and the starving men cursed a mean heaven that had left the bones hollow instead of packing them with marrow.

But the great windfall was a crate of bananas washed overboard from some fruit-boat's deckload. They were big coarse West Indian bananas, but to the starved palates they were ambrosia. They ate six apiece for the first meal, and felt that any hardships were worth going through to know a bliss like that.

It was at the next mid-day, whilst Jenkins sailed the boat and the Mate was standing up with his sextant in the stern sheets, that they saw a steamer's smoke over the saucer-rim of the horizon.

Digitized by Google

Presently they were able to make out the trucks of her masts, and thereafter they rose her rapidly. They were right in her track. Here was rescue at last.

The ragged crew in their joy stood up and danced, but Mr. Kettle the Mate had a fine sense of discipline. When he wanted baboon tricks he would let them know. In the meanwhile he wished them to carry on duty as before. "And send aft the Senegambian," said he.

"Sar?"

"Weren't you in a barber-shop once, before shore got too hot and you had to come to sea?"

"Yes, sar. I'se a sure 'nough tonsorial artist."

"Good. Not got the usual coon's razor concealed about your person?"

"No, sar. Never carry such a thing."

"First United States coon I ever met who didn't. Well, take that pig-knife you're so fond of, and borrow Baldy's, and sharpen yours against his. Savvy?"

"Yes, sar."

"That's right. Now use one blade against the other, scissor-fashion, and trim my beard. I'll have it clipped torpedo-shape."

The big evil-faced negro gasped. "Trim yo' beard?"

"That's what I said. If you do it well, I'll give you threepence. If you make a hash of it, I'll lam you with the tiller."

For an instant murder peeped out from the black man's onyx eyes. Mr. Kettle expected it, looked for it, and nodded acknowledgment. "You won't try and cut my throat, because you know I'd have those two eyes of yours gouged out before you got even started. Come now, my lad, get a move on, or we'll have that steamboat alongside."

The Mate put out his chin, and the ex-tonsorial artist plied his trade. The other men watched with the eyes of fascination.

CHAPTER V

THE CHARITY OF THE SEAS

COBALT sky above, and the deep blue of the Sargasso Sea patched with islets of orange-yellow weed. On it a black steamer, high-bowed and stump-masted, surging along with a bone in her teeth towards the south and west. Also a white ship's life-boat, rigged with mildewed lugsail and jib, and manned by a crew of gaunt scarecrows. The life-boat is lying-to across the steamer's track, and the steamer wears her standard compass on the top of a ten-foot mast painted banana-green. That is the picture to carry in mind.

* * * * * * *

Mr. Kettle the Mate, after regarding the truculent cock of his red torpedo-beard at many angles in the back of his watch-case, finally approved, dived into his pocket, and produced three green-stained pennies which he presented to his barber.

"Hope to have the continuance o' yo' custom, sar," said that artist, dusting the débris of the operation from his patron with professional sibilation.

"I'll recommend you to the warders," said the Mate dryly, "when I call on visiting days. Hands, take in sail! Lower away smartly now—unship that mast—out oars; we mustn't keep that fellow waiting. He seems in a hurry. A Dutchman, too, to judge by that sawn-off smoke-stack. Give weigh!"

Up till now the steamer had been bearing directly down upon them. But as she drew more near, she seemed to be sheering out of her course a trifle to the northward. There was a long heavy ocean swell running, and she yawed a good deal in her steering, and it was hard to make out exactly where she was aiming for; but Mr. Kettle, with an Englishman's contempt for the German mariner, set this down to the inefficiency of her wheel quartermaster and to the watch officer who oversaw him.

The vessel was close aboard of them by this time and they could read her name, *Rhein*, in dull brass letters on the flaring curve of her bows. She had a high upper bridge, with three square-shouldered officers on it who swayed rigidly to the roll. One, a big fellow, with a fair spade-shaped beard and much uniform, was obviously the Captain. He wore spectacles. He stared at the boat but neither waved nor made other signs; and Mr. Kettle, to whom it was a point of honor not to make first advances, sat rigidly by his tiller, and sent out no sign either.

The *Rhein* surged up, drew level, and passed. On the sterns of the boats that hung in her davits they read that her port was Hamburg, and probably every soul in the boat had hot thoughts about that city, but for long enough not a word was uttered.

The black man was the first to give

Digitized by Google

tongue. "Sar, sar," he yammered, after the dwindling stern, whilst the life-boat rocked in the cream of the wake. "Mistah Captain, for de love o' Gawd don' leave us! I tell you for true we's starvin'! Oh sar, stop yo' steamah! Hi, you son-of-a-dog-of-a-Dutchman, we's gwine for to die if you don' stop 'n pick us up!"

Then his boat-mate, the German, chimed in, cursing the *Rhein* and all she carried in a tongue that ought to have appealed to her. And to him were added all the boat's complement, with one exception, as chorus. But Mr. Kettle the Mate sat by the tiller without a word and without change of countenance.

As she drew out of earshot, a white-faced man with an inflamed nose ran aft along the steamer's decks and stood on her taffrail holding on by the ensign staff. He howled out sentences which they could not catch, and waved a grimy hand. Then a woman came and joined him, her skirts blowing out shrewdly in the wind of the steamer's passage. She also waved her hand and shouted, and though the tones of her shriller voice reached them, they could not make out the words. And every instant the steamer grew smaller and more distant.

His crew still shouted and sobbed and danced, but presently the grim little Mate pulled them up sharply enough with a curt command for, "Silence in the boat!"

"If you've all quite finished giving a free variety-show for that painted Dutchman, perhaps you'll re-step that mast, and let's be getting under weigh again."

Baldhead flopped to a heap on the floor-boards. "What's the good?" he muttered. "We're as good as dead now!"

"You may be," snapped the Mate. "I'm not. I've got to live for a lot of things; amongst others to pay my compliments to that glass-eyed skipper with the tow beard, and to skin that pirate with the incandescent nose who mocked at me from the poop staff. By James, if you swivel-kneed blighters are going to weaken now and let those skunks live unpunished, I'm not! I'm going to teach them sea manners if I have to go to Berlin and set fire to their blessed Emperor's palace to do it! Step that mast, you jelly-backed sons of sin!"

THOUGH black despair rode heavy on the shoulders of the marooned crew, white-hot rage thrilled through every artery of their officer's small body. It was not so much the brutal desertion which left them to perish there in the desert of the ocean that affected him, as the insolence of a mere German daring to do this thing. Like all Britons and Americans who use the sea, he looked down upon the Dago and the Dutchman as inferiors in craft, wit, pluck and bodily strength. Time after time he had driven whole crews of these men to do his bidding with no heavier weapons than a greenhart belaying-pin, and a mouthful of hard words, so that for a Dutchman to disregard his signal—his urgency signal—was unbelievable.

He re-rigged his boat and once more got her under weigh. But passion did not interfere with his clearness of head. For a sea-sodden ship's life-boat to give chase to a steamboat, however low her power, was ridiculous. The Mate was the last man on earth to wish for this. His plan was once more to patrol the steam-lane, pick up a more genial rescuer, and take her off to the help of the *Norman Towers*, as already arranged; and to this end (and with the aid of the oak tiller) he once more hammered his disheartened crew into activity and submission.

But half-way to the horizon hung a portent which for long enough he disregarded. The *Rhein* had shown them her stern, had steamed away and grown smaller and still more small. But at a certain point this diminution lost its fixed progression; and the vessel lay there sawing up and down over gentle swells and remaining of a constant bigness. Between boat and steamer lay many blue acres of the Sargasso Sea, patched here and there with neat gardens of orange-yellow herbage, and the fact of her having come to a standstill was slow in making itself understood. The men glared after the steamer sullenly, resentfully, mutteringly, and not till their officer had made the discovery himself and called upon them to flatten in sheets so that the life-boat might bear up in her wake, did the fact of her stoppage dawn upon them.

The change in their demeanor was natural enough. Jenkins and the German stood up together, twined arms, and footed it in an uncouth dance. Olsen, the Dane, fainted. Baldy dropped to his knees, shut his eyes tight and babbled incoherent prayers. The big gross negro alone was ungrateful. He stared after the *Rhein* with bared teeth and starting eyeballs; he muttered evilly to himself; and presently, slipping a hand to the

Digitized by Google

knife-sheath behind his belt, he drew his weapon and made vicious stabs with it into the bodies of imaginary enemies.

The little Mate watched all this with a grim smile, and the life-boat had run half a mile over the cobalt swells before he gave speech.

"I suppose," said he, "that most of you ducks think that glorified Dutchman is smitten with sudden pangs of hospitality. Don't you believe it. He's broken down, and I guess the Senegambian here with the Sheffield ware is the only sinner in the boat, barring myself, who's tumbled to it."

"Yes, sar," said the black, "an' I'se gwine to slice his liver out!"

"You will cut just what parts of his anatomy I order, neither more nor less. In the meanwhile put that cutlery out of sight. D'you hear me? That's a good man. Now all hands, listen. We're going to range up alongside, and we're going to board. I don't suppose they'll help us—being Dutchmen. But, thank the Lord, there are a couple of boathooks in the boat that we can hitch on to his rail if he won't throw us a rope, and we must make shift to go hand over fist up those. You're all steamer sailors, and you don't know how to climb, but if any man doesn't learn enough for this occasion, he'll have me to deal with afterward, and I don't recommend the experience.

"Once on board, if there's any argument, you're to attend to officers only. If one of you pulls a knife, I'll throw him overboard; this scrap is to be gone through English-fashion, if scrap there is to be. There's to be no killing. But if they show ugly, you may hammer them as hard as you like. And remember also, nobody's to tackle the Old Man. He's my meat. And you needn't worry about deckhands. Go for the officers—if there's trouble—bowl them over, lash them up, and throw them into the chart-house. Savvy all that, Mr. Jenkins?"

"Yes, sir, and what afterward?"

"That I'll attend to, and will let you know my wishes in due time."

CHAPTER VI

"HE'S A SCOT—A MR. McTODD"

THE *Rhein*, with stopped propeller, lay rolling in the dark blue troughs, and the white life-boat, magnificently handled, raced down to her, close-hauled to a spanking breeze. Half a dozen fathoms short of the steamer's lee Mr. Kettle smartly rounded-to and let drop his lugsail and jib. He sheered up alongside, and the crew fended off cannily with oar-looms so that the steamer should not crush them with her downward roll.

But though men stood at the rail that swooped and soared above them, the hospitable rope of invitation was not thrown—as Mr. Kettle had anticipated. So he gave sharp orders, and at the next downward roll two boathooks were suddenly up-ended and hooked on to her rail, and, gripping these with their hands, Mr. Kettle and Jenkins walked up the *Rhein's* rusty black side and over the barrier above.

The Germans, it is true, had not invited them; but throwing men back into their boat to starve to death once they had made their way on board was another matter; and so, though the life-boat's crew stepped inboard over the rail without help, they did it also without interference.

Mr. Kettle rounded up his men with their backs against a deck-house. "Mr. Jenkins," said he, "I leave you in charge. I'm going topside to interview the Old Man on a matter of business. I'm quite competent to tackle the crowd on the bridge, but if these ducks down here feel called upon to interfere, I'd be obliged if you'd keep them amused."

"Aye, aye, sir."

The little Mate turned and stepped lightly up the ladder to the upper bridge.

The big, square-shouldered German Captain met him. "You come on to my bridge unasked!" he roared. "Are these your English manners?"

"Yes," said Kettle cheerfully, "and I've come here specially to teach you more of them, you glass-eyed Dutchman!" On which he seized the big German's beard in his iron fist, and jerked it to this side and to that till the unfortunate owner felt that his head was being wrenched adrift from its moorings. And then, when he had his man half dazed, and before the two other officers and the quartermaster on the bridge had recovered sufficiently from their astonishment at the sudden attack to offer assistance, he swung his victim round and, using him as a battering-ram, drove the others before him till he had cleared the bridge and had the Captain to himself.

"And now," said he, "we have room for

Digitized by Google

a little quiet, thoughtful talk. What do you suppose I was sitting out in that boat for in the middle of the Sargasso Sea? Good of my health?"

The German Captain felt his head gingerly to make sure it was still in its socket, and murmured something about owners insisting on no breakage of passage.

"Quite so. They're Dutch owners with no manners. You mustn't be guided by them. I left my steamboat two and a half degrees north of this in a state of some distress. Our Chief had gone loony and had figured short on coal. So I've come down here to find enough to fill the deficiency."

"You have come for——? I do not understand."

"Coal, I said. I take it you've enough to see you to Tampico and back to happy sausage-land?"

"Vera Cruz is my port. I carry enough coal to steam from there to N'York. No more."

"It will be plenty. You can come with me and deliver up enough to see us home, and we'll leave you the change. You can run into Tampico and re-bunker from the coal-shoots down-river there before you turn her nose for Vera Cruz harbor walls."

"But"—the big German spread the palms of expostulation—"but I am not a collier ship! I do not wish to sell coal!"

"If you don't sell, it will be taken from you. You are going to part with it anyway."

"I can not think you mean this. What you propose is piracy on the high seas, no less!"

"Put it in poetry and set it to music, if you think that will ease you. But your coal my steamboat is going to have. I don't know that the point interests me very much, but for sake of formality and for entering in the log I'd like to hear if you'll give it up on reasonable terms."

The German Captain was cowed, maltreated, shaken, but he found his backbone here.

"You may kill me if you like, and I suppose you will. But it shall never be said that of free will I betrayed the trust my owner has given me! My honor is all that I have left, and I will keep that."

"Kill you?" said the little Mate contemptuously. "What's your value as cold meat to me? You're no use as fuel now, though I dare say you'll be used as that in the sweet by-and-bye. Coal's what I'm after, and the side issues have been brought in by your lack of manners." He made a sudden dive and produced a revolver from the after part of the German's clothing. "H'm, I thought so. A man who speaks his English with a Massachusetts accent like yours was bound to carry a gun to match. And yet, Lord! you hadn't savvy enough to pull it! You're an amazing back number. Well, I guess you'll have to camp out in your own chart-house till I give further orders. Don't you dare to answer me! And if you try any tricks I'll pluck your beard clean out by the roots next time! Now, quick march! *Vorwarts!*"

ONLY once did the German attempt further expostulation. But when he turned he looked down the black barrel of his own revolver, and the sight cowed him finally. He suffered himself to be hustled into his own chart-house, and there collapsed on the settee.

To him were driven under varying circumstances of indignity his three mates and Chief Engineer, and Jenkins, with another filched revolver, stood guard over the door.

"And now," said Mr. Kettle, addressing the balance of the crew within reach, "does any one dispute that, owing to the lamentable defection and incapability of other officers, I am in full command of this junk?"

There was no answer.

"Carried," said Mr. Kettle. "Very good, then. I don't allow my decks to be used as an Alameda. Watch below, get below! Mr. Jenkins, you're Mate. Get hold of your deckhands on duty, and set them to washing this filthy paint. I like a clean ship. You, Quartermaster, my compliments to the second engineer, and I'd be glad if he'd come and report to me how long it will be before he can have the ship under weigh again."

Some men are born to command, and Mr. Owen Kettle, the Mate of the *Norman Towers*, was one of them. He had the knack of the words, and Nature and practise had given him the clear, crisp, carrying voice in which to deliver them. Men instinctively jumped to carry out orders when he gave them.

Miss Violet Chesterman, who came from a military stock herself, noted this with keen appreciation. So much depends on the timbre of a voice.

Digitized by Google

Miss Chesterman, it chanced, had been the first of all on board the *Rhein* to see the life-boat. She had been sitting under the shade of an awning, reading a novel, which (luckily for Kettle) bored her. She had looked up, and there on the edge of the blue desert of sea spied the boat. She shaded her eyes and saw men in it waving frantically. What woman would not have been thrilled?

She had jumped to her feet and run to the bridge ladder and given her alarm. Captain Engelberg in his most stiff and pompous manner had intimated that he intended to conduct the affairs of his ship without the unasked-for assistance of passengers. And then, when she saw that no attempt was going to be made to pick up the life-boat, she had taken steps to have the passage of the *Rhein* rudely interrupted.

All this, of course, Mr. Kettle did not know. But his eyes told him that the lady in white muslin who came up from aft was extremely good-looking, and he returned her greeting with cordiality and mentioned his surprise at finding an Englishwoman on a German tramp cargo-boat.

The lady shrugged. "I had my reasons." And then she laughed. "But I'll freely own that I didn't travel by the *Rhein* for comfort. To be frank with you, I've found both the ship and her German officers more detestable than I imagined could be possible. I heard Captain Engelberg call you a pirate just now." She laughed again. "I don't know if you are that, or what you are, but anyway I'm sure your régime will be an improvement."

"Your comfort, Miss, shall be a thing that I will look after most narrowly. You give me word the first time a steward neglects you or your room, or the cook doesn't dish up to your taste, and then you stand by to see me make that man hop. As regards being a pirate, there are extenuating circumstances about the way I had to come aboard here which even a Stipendiary Magistrate couldn't overlook, and anyway, as Chief Officer of the *Norman Towers* I have to bring back coal to my own Captain, let the opposition be what it may. As regards personal matters, I've pretty well squared them up already, except that I've still got to attend to that man who stood beside you near the poop-staff and mocked at my boat when she was being left behind. You must understand, Miss, that I don't allow any man living to laugh at me."

"But I'm not a man. So you will let me laugh, won't you? Your mistake is so funny. If it wasn't for the man you're speaking of you wouldn't be here at all, and the *Rhein* would be some considerable number of miles farther along her way."

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"Well, he is a Scot, a Mr. McTodd, and he and I are the only non-Germans on board. I'm afraid we are neither of us popular, but I gather he is pretty actively disliked. You see, he's in the stokehold and (according to his own account) he undertook to teach the ship's company boxing."

"H'm," said Mr. Kettle, bristling. "Fancies himself with his hands, does he? And the engine-room officers didn't know how to keep discipline? It was about time I came to teach them."

"You might take into account the small item that in all probability he saved your life," the lady suggested. "I'm afraid I'm no engineer, but perhaps you can tell me if there is a thing called a thrust connected with the machinery?"

"Thrust-blocks, yes, Miss."

"Well, Mr. McTodd left me with designs that were connected with the thrust, and a shovelful of ashes, and 'nutting her up tight.' Frankly, the technicalities were quite beyond me, and very likely I've reported them inaccurately. Also there are moments when Mr. McTodd's best Pollockshields accent is completely outside my grasp."

"Speaks as if he had no roof to his mouth?"

"Precisely. And so beyond the fact that his scheme was calculated to give pain to the engineer staff and to bring the machinery to a standstill, I'm afraid I can't describe it."

"He seems to have delivered the goods all right," said the little sailor dryly. "And I shouldn't like you to go away and think your description was a bad one, Miss. But for a subordinate to tamper with the ship's engines is a very serious offense against professional etiquette."

"At any rate you should be the last to complain."

"I trust, Miss, that I shall always have the strength to do what I consider right, whether it's to my own advantage or the reverse. I must ask you to excuse me for the moment. I take it that this man with the black eye and the fat lip is the Second Engineer that I sent for, and I've got to hear his report."

Digitized by Google

THE *Rhein's* Second Engineer had come on deck with no inclination to recognize the authority of the invader, and his introductory sentences were not those of urbanity. Mr. Kettle did not interrupt. He merely looked at him, and by quick degrees civility oozed into the man's discourse.

He spoke in technicalities of a smell of heated iron, a frenzied search, a bearing that threatened to seize. Nothing but an instant stoppage of the main engines saved the *Rhein* from a broken shaft. Some malefactor had done the thing. Search was made for him. He was found. A court (according to precedent) was assembled for his trial, and evidence was taken down at length in writing.

"Instead of getting your old coffee-mill mended up and running again."

"I did as my Chief ordered. He acted according to routine."

"I see. Dutch routine. Well, Mr. Ehrenbreitstein, what I want to know here and now, is how long is it going to take you to get under weigh again? You may clap on all the hands you need or can use."

"I could not guarantee to have the engines turning again in less than twenty-four hours."

A voice from behind interrupted. "Vara true. Twenty-four hours is short allowance, too, for the Dutchies. The job would take even me a good two hours, and I'm a mechanic with a fine record in the Clydebank shops at my tail."

The little sailor turned sharply and looked upward. The upper part of a large grimy man projected through the fiddley gratings above. He had a towsled head and a cut over his left eye which at intervals he mopped with a handful of discolored cotton waste.

"Are you McTodd?"

"I was when I signed on. But on account of sheer professional abeelity I've been promoted fourth engineer on this junk, so ye'll kindly clap on the Mister when you address me."

"Then it was you that tampered with the engines?" asked the little sailor sourly.

"Just me. It was a most unprofessional thing to do (as I've no doubt your tongue is itching to tell me), but I had ma' reasons."

"If you wish me to thank you for saving my life, I do it, here and now."

"Man, you may consairve your breath and spare ma' blushes. I take it ye're just a sailor-man that's paid to be drowned, and not having at that time the pleasure of your fascinating acquaintance I'm free to tell you I didn't care the value of a bawbee whether ye sank or swam. When I tampered with yon thrust, I did it to oblige the leddy. She seemed anxious to give you the chance of treading a dry deck."

Miss Chesterman was quick to see the antagonism that had sprouted up between the two and made skilful intervention. "I was going to ask if Captain Kettle would come and have a cup of tea with me, as I know Mr. McTodd wishes to get on with his repairs."

The little sailor's red face deepened in hue till it became almost purple. Like most mates he had held a master's certificate for long enough, but this was the first time anyone had given him the title.

Mr. McTodd from above winked a shrewd eye. "Miss," said he, "you've diplomacy, and the next time you find yourself in a vice-consul's office you may tell them I said so. It's a fine gift. But deal gently with the young man. Well, I'll go below to pour oil into the wounds of yon thrust. I wish I'd the wine which we're told the guid Samaritan also carried in his First Aid kit. It's vara exhausting to work in the heat of this engine-room without lubricant. And the messroom's dry. I hadn't been promoted there three days from the fireman's fo'castle when supplies ran oot."

"If you will let me I will send the cabin steward down with a tray."

"Say no more, m'em. I'll treasure your memory."

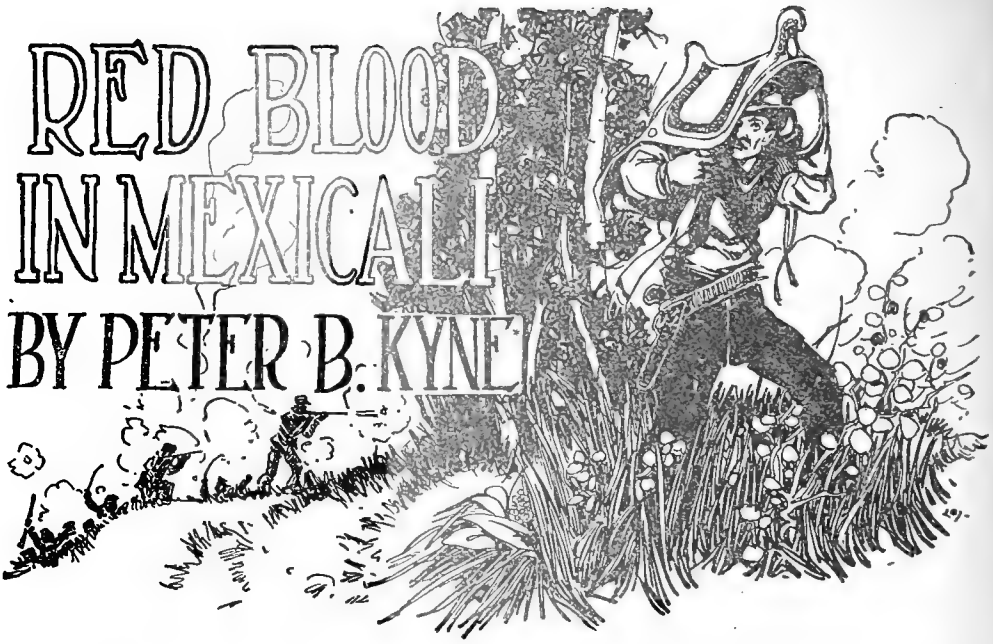
Miss Chesterman's cup of tea developed itself into a tidy meal, and Kettle faced it with the appetite that is grown only after starvation in an open boat. A table was brought out on deck and an abject steward waited on him with twittering knees.

TO BE CONTINUED

Digitized by Google

RED BLOOD IN MEXICALI

BY PETER B. KYNE



WHEREVER there is war or rumors of war, there the Restless Spirits of the world foregather. They are a motley assemblage of "bad actors," called together by a common impulse and in that thrilling melodrama entitled, "The Struggles of a Banana Republic," they preëmpt the star parts.

At the conclusion of the great battle scene in the last act they are not called to the footlights to receive the thunderous salvos of the grateful proletariat, but strut, smiling and debonair, out into the wings to pack their trunks for the next stand. And when the curtain drops on the closing act of a Restless Spirit's existence, these few lines in the daily press are likely to be all his epitaph:

The body of an American, supposed to have been a member of the insurrecto force which attacked the Federal troops near Angeles on the 12th inst., was found by a line rider yesterday, a mile west of the scene of Thursday's battle.

That man is the victim of the Red Corpuscle. So they bury him there in the mesquite, without "bell or book" or "benefit of clergy." No bugle sounds quavering taps for him, no crashing volleys waft his restless soul to its dreamless sleep. Only a steer comes down to the little mound and bellows his disapproval, for he has smelled blood and he does not like it.

* See page 190.

And when the sun sinks beyond the turquoise mountains over Ensenada way, a coyote comes out under the stars and voices the age-old wrongs of his species. There is no other requiem, save, perhaps, the sigh of the hot wind that blows down the Imperial Valley not pausing at the international boundary line but continuing on, levels the sun-scorched soil of Mexico over the victim of the Red Corpuscle.

And that is the last of the soldier of fortune.

SEVENTY of the Restless Spirits had forgathered at Los Algodones, attracted thither by war. It was no quarrel of theirs, yet after the manner of their kind they chose to consider it such and cast their lot with the under dog; for when the under dog wins, he is likely to be generous to a generous ally, and pending the day of ultimate victory, the looting is always good. Also, after the manner of their kind, they declined to fight under Mexican leadership. They formed a legion all their own, styled it the Second Division of the Liberal Army and, under the leadership of a man with Red Blood in his veins, they marched from Los Algodones to Mexicali.

They arrived in Mexicali on the afternoon of Friday, April 7th, 1911, and there were some who rode and some who walked. At

Digitized by Google

the head of the Restless Spirits rode a man on a bay horse. In a home-made black-leather gun-boot on the left of his saddle hung a Winchester rifle and at the man's right hip swung a Colt 45. He wore two cartridge-belts and a bandoleer across his breast and he whistled through his teeth as he rode, for his spirit was blithe within him. The man was "General" Stanley Williams and by his side trotted a mongrel dog, half coyote, half collie.

Behind the leader rode another man, similarly attired, only this man was grave, after the gravity of the English, and rode with a little lilting movement in the unaccustomed saddle of the range. The second man was "Captain" C. A. R. Pryce, late of the Police in Mashonaland, late of the Imperial Light Horse.

On the right flank of this straggling cavalcade rode a blond man, with carefully cropped imperial and gold in his teeth. He wore gold-rimmed eyeglasses and a battered campaign hat pinched into a "Montana peak," which looked as if it might have seen service under the Stars and Stripes. It had. This man was First Lieutenant F. J. Leclare, late of the old 1st Washington Volunteers, the 22nd United States Infantry and the Sixth United States Cavalry. He served in the Philippines and China.

Beside him rode Second Lieutenant "Melbourne" Hopkins and, when he spoke, his Australian Cockney accent explained his nickname. He was young—twenty-four, perhaps—and he smiled as he rode into Mexicali. He thought of General Vegas, who tried to take the town in broad daylight from the insurrectos and got his jaw shot away for his pains. Melbourne Hopkins would have attacked at night and come to close quarters after the fashion of the natives of New Guinea where his spirit first grew restless.

Toward the tail of the little army rode Third Lieutenant "Bull-dog" Smith, and he, too, was very young. His handsome face was a healthy brown and his smiling eyes were blue and kind. He leaned from his horse to pat the dark head of a peon baby playing in the dirt of Mexicali's single street and murmured, "You poor little beggar."

Followed then, top sergeant Paul Schmidt, ex-sergeant of A Troop, 13th United States Cavalry; first duty sergeant "Mike" Dunn, late of the Marines; sergeant James Larkins, late of the Northwest Mounted Police; Private "Shorty" O'Donnell of Texas, and Private "Rusty" Kincaid of Oklahoma, both Gentlemen of the Range; Private "Spike" Harrigan, late of the United States navy; Private Foulke, late of the 159th company of Coast Artillery, U. S. A.; Private Charles King (his Summer name), a young Syrian who found things too quiet for him in the Balkans; "Dynamite Bill" Perkins (no pedigree obtainable); Juan F. Montero, of Peru, who came north because things were so deadly dull in his own country; Tomitito, a Mexican cowboy from the California-Mexican Land & Cattle Company's ranch, who didn't care to live if he had to live in social slavery; Jack Richardson, seventeen years old, fresh from the late unpleasantness in Corinto and Bluefields; Michael John O'Hara, late of the Dublin Fusileers and wondering "where in th' name av common sinse he left his pipe"; Jack Gordon (colored), late of the Ninth United States Cavalry; Enoch McMasters (also colored), late of the 24th United States Infantry; ex-Texas and Arizona Rangers; a few high-school boys; three or four college men; as many more ex-hobos; a dozen cowboys and a few railroad men, but Restless Spirits all.

And they were all ragged and brown and happy and bristling with hardware, and they rode into Mexicali with General Stanley William's "*por tierra y libertad*," which, literally translated, means that they were spoiling for a fight and willing to annihilate the Federal army under the impression that they were doing it "For Land and Liberty." It is ever thus with Restless Spirits.

THEY camped for the night in the western end of Mexicali, after a nondescript manner of their own, and William Johnson, the company cook, prepared supper. Private "Bull" Beresford, for "sassing" Lieutenant Melbourne Hopkins, was detailed to help him. They had roast beef with baked potatoes and brown gravy, tortillas and coffee, for they had passed through a country rich with defenseless American-owned ranches on Mexican soil and a Restless Spirit is always hungry.

After supper General Stanley Williams walked up to the eastern end of Mexicali and reported himself and the Second Division of the Liberal army for duty, to "General" Francisco Vasquez Salinas, in command of the dark-skinned spirits (not quite

Digitized by Google

so restless); and would General Salinas be good enough to advise General Williams of the wherabouts of the Federal army; also how soon he (Salinas) purposed attacking the enemy; also how many men the enemy had.

Diablo! A curse upon the Federal army. General Salinas had been too busy designing a uniform for himself and staff, and his scouts would not brook being disturbed in a game of three-card monte which even now was in progress over at the *cantina*. He seemed to remember having heard that the enemy was between Los Algodones and Ensenada, but he hadn't thought it necessary to verify the report.

Concerning the strength of the Federal army, General Salinas thought it might approximate a hundred and fifty or two hundred men. As for attacking! Well, *quién sabe?* Perhaps he would do so *poco tiempo*. Come to think of it, he might possibly attack *mañana*.

Whereupon General Stanley Williams whistled some more through his teeth; subdued a desire to pull General Salinas around Mexicali by the nose and went back to the Restless Spirits.

Two hundred men! A low murmur of satisfaction went up from the Seventy. Three to one! That would make a nice fight, an easy fight. Very fair odds, indeed, though some there were who would have preferred a row more worthy of their attainments. Dynamite Bill was so mad he came very nearly deserting. He said it was like striking a cripple. A Restless Spirit, be it known, is good for ten brunette patriots—or thinks he is, which amounts to very much the same thing when it comes to counting noses.

Be that as it may, when the restless leader of the Restless Spirits announced that the Second Division of the Liberal army would hereafter run a personally conducted war of its own, there was joy in the ranks of the Second Division; that is, with the exception of Michael John O'Hara. The Irish are a pensive, superstitious race and contrary always, for as "Michael Jawn" sat on the tongue of one of the transport wagons cleaning his old Springfield carbine, some presentiment of approaching death or the monstrous paradox of having to fight with a single-shot Springfield in these days of magazine rifles, awoke the springs of his sorrow. In a dolorous voice he chanted:

"Lay me on th' hillside, wit' me face turned towarrd th' west,
Towarrd that green land where Irishmin, where ere they are, love best.
Let a bunch av shamrocks green, be planted o'er me grave—
Me dyin' prayer is 'God bless th' island av th' brave.'"

"Chop it, Michael J.," howled Dynamite Bill, "you'll frighten the recruits."

"Is that so?" replied Michael J. "I'll frighten some wan if I don't get a clane bit av a rag this minut. I will *not* tear another sthrip off me shirt-tail t' keep this worn-out, single-shot, cast-off, condimned ould brute av a Springfield 45-70 ready f'r inspection. 'Tis a crool shame t' ask a man with twinty-one years av service, an' divil a day av it featherbed soldierin', t' face his Maker wit' such a weapon. 'Tis small comfort I'll get out av th' impindin' festivities. Divil a bit more nor ten shots a minute can I get out av her, Willie."

"There'll be Government Mausers for distribution after the first scrap," says Dynamite Bill soothingly.

"Thrue f'r yez, Willie. We'll have th' pick av thim, too. Those little black divils av insurrectos will come along shouting 'Victhry' afther we've polished off th' inimy an' there's some comfort in that. They'll not be in our way at any rate."

"When you get through cleaning that rifle," said Dynamite Bill, "come over and help me make some hand-grenades."

Which, of course, Michael John O'Hara did. Dynamite Bill had found a length of rusty two-inch iron waterpipe, which he had managed to cut into nine-inch sections. These sections he filled with dynamite, plugging the ends with wood and leaving a hole through one plug for the insertion of a fuse.

Long into the night Dynamite Bill and his fellows worked at their deadly task. They managed to make thirty-nine hand grenades, after which they followed the example of the rest of the army and went to sleep wherever they could find a comfortable place. Michael John O'Hara found some tall grass back of the horse lines and rolled his sad person in a saddle-blanket. He slept well.

AT FIVE o'clock next morning, a gruff voice sounded through that portion of Mexicali occupied by the Restless Spirits.

"Roll oudt, roll oudt!" said the voice.

Digitized by Google

It was Paul Schmidt, the top sergeant, sounding first call. For alas, while there are two ex-buglers in the Second Division of the Liberal army, the Q. M. department is badly disorganized and they haven't been able to find a bugle yet. Perhaps some day, if they follow Michael John O'Hara, they may. He knows where to look for such things.

The army got up, put on its hat and went over to the irrigation ditch. Here it performed its matutinal ablutions and was ready for aught that Fate might send. It sent William Johnson, the cook, announcing breakfast.

"Come and get it!" yelled William. And they came.

"Porky, porky, porky, without a strip of lean,
Soupy, soupy, soupy, without a single bean,
Coffee, coffee, coffee, the worst you ever se-en,"

caroled Spike Harrigan, imitating mess call. But Spike is merely having something to say. His mess-call parody is a libel, for no real Restless Spirit will fight on the army field ration. The Second Division breakfasted that momentous morning of April 8th on beefsteak and onions, stewed prunes, coffee and hot cakes with maple syrup. Praise the God of Battles, they had raided a ranch storehouse down at Packard the day before.

Breakfast over, Paul Schmidt appoints a stable detail to feed the stock. There are twenty horses scattered among the Second Division, also thirty-six big mules, with harness and wagons commandeered on the trip up to Mexicali.

While the animals are feeding, the entire possessions of the army are loaded into the wagons, those who have canteens fill them, the full quota of ammunition is issued and the outposts are withdrawn. At seven o'clock the mules are harnessed to the wagons. There are two eight-, one six- and two four-mule teams; also the ambulance to which are attached six mules. Mule skinners are not wanting in the Second Division and each team quickly has a driver.

By seven-thirty all is in readiness and the "General" gives the order to fall in. The twenty mounted men ride out in advance, the forty-five infantry follow, and with the ambulance and wagon train bringing up the rear the Restless Spirits file out of Mexicali and take the road to the south. Melbourne Hopkins, with Shorty O'Donnell and Rusty Kincaid, rides out of ranks, down through a draw, to the Neu River, fords the river and disappears in the tall mesquite.

They are the "advance guard," riding wide through the flat country. Lieutenant Hopkins carries the army's most cherished possession, a pair of field-glasses. They ride cautiously, standing erect in their saddles at times to scan the plain; and riding thus, they come in time to Little's ranch. In a field half a mile from the ranch they halt—and history commences!

"There's a cove plowing in the field," says the lieutenant, "we'll ride over and arsk him if he's seen any Federals. Eh, what?"

"Lets ride fast, then," growled Rusty Kincaid; "he's unhooked his team an' is headin' for th' ranch."

The three scouts spur across the field toward the ranch hand, who, casting one hurried glance over his shoulder, climbs aboard one of his horses, lashes the team into a trot and scurries for home.

"I say, old chap! Wyte a minute, cawn't you?" calls the lieutenant politely.

"I'll stop him," says Shorty O'Donnell, and he comes with a rush across the plowed field, trying to head the man off from the ranch, entreating him in Spanish and English to pull up, that nobody is going to hurt him.

But the ranch hand only beats his team with the end of the reins and forces them to a gallop. Fast as he goes, however, the three scouts come faster, and the man, seeing that he is about to be overtaken before he can reach the ranch proper, slides from his horse and runs to a nearby barn. He ducks into it like a frightened rabbit, pulling the door shut behind him.

"Isn't the beggar frightened?" comments the lieutenant, and rides into the yard of Little's ranch. He is minded to give himself and his horse a drink of water and to that end he dismounts, just as a man steps out of the door of the adobe ranch house.

Strange to relate, no sooner has this man seen the three scouts than he, too, becomes frightened; for if he comes out one door, he fairly flies in through another.

"I say, old chap," bawled the lieutenant, beginning to get exasperated, "cawn't you wyte a minute? I want to talk with you. Have you seen——"

And just then Melbourne Hopkins sees for himself. Around the corner of the ranch house come two Federal soldiers and the lieutenant's Colt automatic leaps from its

Digitized by Google

holster. The two Federals yell and spring back to the shelter of the corner and Melbourne runs for his horse.

As he vaults into the saddle he sees fully thirty Federal heads bob up from behind an irrigation ditch which runs past the ranch house. This irrigation ditch commands the the field across which they have just come and escape in that direction is cut off, but a fenced road leads south from the ranch and away from danger.

"Beat it!" shrieks Melbourne, whirling his horse for the mouth of the road, just as one of the Federals steps around the corner of the house again and draws a bead on the lieutenant's back. He never fires. Rusty Kincaid, lifting his horse with spur and Spanish bit until the animal whirls on its hind legs, jerks loose his Colt, half turns in his saddle and takes a snap shot over his left shoulder. He grins as he returns the gun to his holster and dashes away after Hopkins and O'Donnell.

DOWN the fenced lane the trio thunder, wondering why the Federals do not fire and make a flock shot of it. But the grim humor of it is soon apparent. The road they have taken, by some devilish freak of construction, leads away from the ranch, only to circle around it and come back on the other side.

Too late the scouts see the deadly trap into which they have blundered. The lane is narrow, with a high wire fence—too high to take it sideways—and there is nothing to do but run the gauntlet. The Federals will be waiting for them as they sweep by, broadside on, and the joke is on the Restless Spirits.

Not for an instant do they falter; not for one brief moment do they slacken speed. Only they ride fifteen feet apart, for even in that supreme moment they have forethought enough not to bunch.

The moment they come into view again back of the ranch, the Mausers begin to bark, thirty of them vomiting five steel-jacketed bullets each. Down the lane came the Restless Spirits, spurs sunk home, reins hanging loose on their horses' necks, riding pell-mell into Eternity with their guns in their hands. Shorty O'Donnell, standing in one stirrup and sitting a little sideways, pumps his Winchester carbine into the little cluster of grayish-blue uniforms; Kincaid's long Colt's rises and falls over his left arm with that calm regularity which shows that even as he flashes by he is picking his men; Hopkins holds his automatic on the group and turns it loose.

A mile away they pull up their spent horses, dismount to see if the animals have been hit, reload, remount, grin and jog north to meet the army.

"Jolly bunch of rotters, I say," muses Melbourne Hopkins.

"If I'm ever *jefe politico* of this district," says Shorty, "I'll spread-eagle th' man that built that road."

As for Rusty Kincaid, he says nothing. He is a silent man and given to taking life as he finds it—as witness the Federal soldier at the corner of the house. It is all in the day's work for Rusty. Yet he kind of wishes Teddy Roosevelt could have seen that back-handed shot, for he feels a personal interest in Teddy. He hog-tied a few cows for the ex-President's delectation last fall at Cheyenne.

Presently they turn into the field and ride across country to meet General Williams, who, with his mounted men, has ridden hard to the rescue of his scouts. The infantry is coming along as fast as its sturdy legs can carry it, for it will feel badly if it misses the fun.

Melbourne Hopkins makes his report, General Williams whistles and nods his head, and Michael John O'Hara shows his "buck" teeth through his ragged red mustache, for he scents a lovely fight and a new Mauser rifle when it's all over. Bulldog Smith takes the field-glasses and rides far in advance to reconnoiter, for Melbourne's horse is spent and trembling. Half an hour later he returns to the Restless Spirits.

"They've fallen back from the ranch," he sings out as he gallops up. "They're moving this way to the attack and as nearly as I can make out there's about four hundred of them and two machine guns. It's a much bigger force than we expected to run on to."

"Divil an attack," says Michael John composedly. "'Tis us that'll do the attackin'. They're movin' out t' take station back av the Encina canal, an' 'tis there they'll wait f'r us t' come an' bid them th' time av day."

"Well, lets get to the canal first then," growls Dynamite Bill. A murmur of assent to Bill's suggestion ripples down the ranks of the Second Divison. It will be a lively piece of work, dislodging the Federals from

Digitized by Google

the canal, for when the canal was dug the builders piled the excavated dirt on each side and it forms a very convenient breastwork.

The General reflects that the real work will take place with only the width of the canal between the two armies and, in that event, the Second Division will have a natural breastwork on their side also and, since a Restless Spirit never hesitates at an even break in the choice of fighting ground, Williams decides to attack at once.

Sergeant Mike Dunn rides back to hurry up the infantry and to order the wagon train to halt where it is. The ambulance he orders to the front and presently it arrives, filled with eager doughboys, the six big mules forced to a gallop, with "Doc" Larkins (brother to the sergeant) handling the ribbons. Doc is the regimental Sawbones and sports a sheepskin from a Canadian medical college, though to gaze at him through his dirt and tan and whiskers one would never suspect it. Mike Dunn has had the foresight to throw half a dozen cases of ammunition into the ambulance and with the arrival of the balance of the Restless Spirits, all is in readiness for the advance.

There are sixty-five men, twenty of them mounted, available for duty on the firing line and there is very little talking as they form skirmishers and move out across the fields. There are a few of the men—high-school boys and college graduates, for the most part—who have never been under fire and, seeking to hearten them up, Michael John O'Hara announces it as his opinion that, "some av th' recruits'll be kilt, as sure as Pussy is a cat." Such being very probable, M. J. suggests that said recruits might do worse than make their wills and if in doubt as to a worthy legatee, Michael John begs leave to submit his own name.

Ah, Michael, Michael! You've been there, haven't you? The little nervous laugh that answers your rude jest tells you that you have not heartened them in vain. Even the negro, Jack Gordon, who first got his on the lead-swept hill at Santiago, flashes his ivories and hopes that your sinful head may never connect with anything worse than a beer-bottle.

THE first mile of the advance is made without incident and three-quarters of a mile of open barley field stretch between the oncoming Second Division and the Federal troops. Suddenly a sharp *rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat* comes down the wind and two hundred yards in advance of the skirmish-line there are a number of little explosions! The Federals have opened with a rapid-fire gun, but the little half-pound shrapnel are falling short and elicit nothing more than a ferocious yell from the Restless Spirits.

Michael John O'Hara laughs a wild, derisive Irish laugh and bids the few recruits be of good cheer. "Ye're as safe," says he, "as if ye was dhrinkin' highballs in Timbuctu. Hop along, lads. 'Tis a wooden leg or a wooden overcoat an' divil —— th' difference."

At the first ripple of rifle-fire from behind the canal embankment, Doc Larkins swings his mules down a slightly sunken road to the left. The top of his ambulance is just visible over the waving field of barley and he waits there, chewing tobacco and well content. It is Doc's first campaign, for he is under twenty-six, and somewhere he has read that an army never fires on the Red Cross. He will learn differently to-day.

"Steady, men, steady! Never mind that stuff. It's all high and the closer you get the safer you are. Half a mile back those bullets would be dropping on you. They all shoot high—from the hip." Thus speaks Stanley Williams as they pass unscathed through the first volley, and the lieutenants and non-coms take up the words and pass them down the line. Dynamite Bill, Shorty O'Donnell, Rusty Kincaid and their ilk, riding with half a dozen of their terrible dynamite bombs swinging from a gunny sack on each of their saddles, hold their horses to a slow walk and speak soothingly to them as the animals shiver and jump under the whine and hiss of the bullets.

"They have a mile of firing-line," says Bulldog Smith, "and we have less than a quarter of a mile. Four hundred Federals, boys, or I'm an Indian!"

"Thrue f'r yes, Bulldog," says Michael John, "but they forrm skirmishers in line av squads—Hardee's ould tactics—an' be th' same token it makes th' shooting something pleasant."

The sixty-five Restless Spirits hear this grim report in silence and press onward through the pleasant barley field. And all the time the Mausers are popping, popping, from the edge of the Encina canal and the Hotchkiss guns are spitting away with the same vain results. The Restless Spirits

Digitized by Google

have not fired a shot and they never slacken their grim march through the barley.

Suddenly Stanley Williams' horse flinches, grunts and pitches forward on its head. Williams springs clear, rifle in hand, and continues his walk through the barley, while Paul Schmidt pauses to finish the horse. Now they are five hundred yards from the long Federal firing-line and Michael John O'Hara slips a shell into the worn breach of his aged Springfield and sets the hammer "safe."

"Mother av God," he mutters, "arre we t' take their dirrt f'rever?"

No, Michael, you are not. An officer of rurales is walking along the crest of the canal and he looms dark against the yellow clay. Shorty O'Donnell sees him, takes a quick ragged sight at five hundred yards and pulls away. A subdued "Ah-h-h-h!" goes up from the Restless Spirits as the rurale throws up his arms and falls forward into the canal.

The sound of Shorty's shot goes through the Second Division like a galvanic shock. There is no holding them now and Williams knows it.

"Fire at will!" orders the General. "And don't waste your ammunition."

A wild yell bursts from the thin skirmish-line and to a man they halt and blaze away at the crest of the irrigation ditch.

"Forward! Forward!" comes the hoarse order repeated down the line. The line moves forward slowly and the firing on both sides has swelled to a steady roar. Two more horses go down and the man nearest them quickly ends their suffering.

Now the Restless Spirits are three hundred yards from the canal and ever they press onward, firing intermittently as they come. They dip into a little swale through which runs the dry bed of an old water-course, and here the horsemen dismount to fight on foot, but not until Shorty's horse stands screaming with a shattered knee. Quick as a flash Shorty's Colt is in the animal's ear and, as the line presses onward, leaving their mounts on the little swale, fairly safe from the fire and faithful to the bridle reins dangling on the grass, Shorty is on his knees by the side of his dead horse, loosening the saddle girths.

It will be a long, hot day's work and if Shorty comes through all right he will need that saddle and bridle again. If he unloosens the cinches now he won't have to cut them four hours from now.

Not a man has been hit during the advance, though several have holes through their clothing and more than one hat has been lifted off a daredevil head. Michael John is still heartening the recruits by calling attention to the vile shooting of the enemy. But they are within two hundred yards of the Federals now, which is just the distance that suits a Restless Spirit; so they spread out in the young barley, some standing and some kneeling and watch for Federal heads over the edge of the embankment. The fight has opened in earnest and it is just eleven-thirty by the General's watch.

AT TWO-THIRTY the position of both parties has not changed, only the Federal fire in front of the Liberal firing-line has dwindled to desultory sniping. The Restless Spirits have not had a man hit so far. So they rise out of the barley, make a right turn and advance parallel with the canal, concentrating their fire on the main body of the Federals farther down the line of battle.

Down this way lies the bridge, and it is in the minds of the Restless Spirits to take this bridge, cross it, flank the Federals and roll them into the canal.

But the Federals have had an opportunity by this time to judge of the size of the attacking party by the careful firing it has indulged in all morning, and a hundred and fifty of them have sneaked out across the bridge into the barley field. They have brought their two machine guns with them and the battle proceeds with renewed vigor in the open field.

Stanley Williams stands up and fires into the first squad he sees. He can hardly believe his eyes, for the Restless Spirits are being charged!

But it is a charge that never gathers any real impetus. The Restless Spirits rise out of the barley, to a man, standing erect and under their deadly fire, the Federals retreat in wild disorder to the shelter of the canal. But over in the barley field Shorty O'Donnell kneels with Stanley Williams in his arms and there is a bloody hole through the back of the General's head. Michael John O'Hara lays his smoking Springfield on the ground and stands shaking his fists at the retreating enemy.

"Arrah, but ye'll pay dear for it before this day's wurrk is over!" he shrieks. Dynamite Bill has gone war-mad and is crying

Digitized by Google

like a child. The lever of Paul Schmidt's Winchester is jammed and he sits in the barley, swearing softly; over on the left flank Tomitito, the Mexican cowboy, is writhing with a Mauser through him from shoulder to shoulder.

"I am a dead man," he says in Spanish to Spike Harrigan; "give me my gun. I'll die fighting."

Spike Harrigan gives Tomitito his gun and lifts him high in his arms above the level of the waving barley, that he may see the dozen or more dead Federals in the foreground. Tomitito is satisfied and sinks weakly to his knees. He fires away at the canal until his wound becomes stiff and sore and Spike looks on in ardent admiration. He remembers that Tomitito quit a good thirty-a-month job for this, because he would sooner be dead than live in serfdom.

Williams is semi-conscious and, from time to time for an hour after he is hit, he asks of the progress of the fight. Shorty tells him the fight has barely started and the dying Spirit smiles and mutters, "Good boys!"

There is never a drop of craven blood in the Second Division and they have not failed him in the pinch. He is proud of them to the last. Shorty and Dynamite Bill carry him across the field for half a mile and signal Doc who is waiting with the ambulance.

Straight across the field comes Doc on the gallop. As he swings up on to higher ground and the big red cross on the canvas curtains of the spring wagon that serves the Liberal army for an ambulance comes into view, the Federals mark the plainest target of the day and turn the Hotchkiss guns on him. He is caught fairly in the awful blast and five of his six mules crumple down in a screaming, struggling, kicking mass. But Doc leaps from the ambulance unhurt and undismayed and, carrying such crude first aid appliances as the Restless Spirits possess, he runs to meet Shorty and Dynamite Bill with their gory burden. They leave him with Doc and hurry back to the fighting and there, alone in the barley, Stanley Williams tells Doc his real name and leaves a soldier's message for his "old man."

Back on the firing-line a most audacious job has been attempted. The Federals have dragged a Gatling gun up into the crotch of a big tree in the rear of their line, the better to seek out the shifty white demons in the waving field of barley. Shorty and Rusty and Foulke and Mike Dunn see it first and slaughter the crew around it. A moment later a volley from the Restless Spirits hurls it out of the tree and it lies on the ground abandoned. Michael John O'Hara raises the battle-cry of his race and dances up and down like a wild red-devil.

But back on the left flank the Federals are once more advancing to the attack and the Restless Spirits concentrate their fire around the two Hotchkiss guns. They are playing their deadly tattoo on the little band of invaders hardly a hundred yards away, and it will be a miracle if they are not all annihilated. Pryce has taken command and now his voice rises above the rattle of the guns.

"One of the guns is jammed. Charge!"

Twenty men leap forward, firing as they come, and the crew of the crippled Hotchkiss are wilting where they stand. But a reserve of rurales comes to their aid and smashes the gun with an ax before they, too, fall back once more to the canal embankment, leaving the gun standing in neutral territory. But Shorty O'Donnell and Rusty Kincaid, Dynamite Bill and Michael John, with a dynamite bomb in each hand, follow them, sneaking low through the sheltering grain. Over their stooping bodies Pryce directs the fire of his men and not a head shows over the embankment.

SUDDENLY Dynamite Bill and his crew rise out of the barley with a sputtering bomb in each hand, rush to the edge of the canal and hurl them across into the Federal ranks crouching behind the dirt breastwork!

They have other bombs in their pockets and, in all, they hurl more than twenty of them, the majority of which burst in the Federal ranks. Then the four man-devils creep back through the barley to their neglected rifles.

The ammunition in the ambulance has long since been exhausted, for it is now four o'clock and the fight has been raging since eleven-thirty. One of the mule-skinners has advanced to within half a mile of the firing-line with a four-mule team, hauling ammunition, and there the wagon stands, the four mules dead in the traces.

One by one the Restless Spirits fall back to the wagon to refill their empty belts and bandoleers. McMasters, the big coon from

Digitized by Google

the old 24th, finds a sack of oranges in the wagon and carries it back with him to the firing-line. He crawls along, distributing them to the thirsty Second Division and they all vote him a good fellow and a thoughtful man, for they have been fighting six hours without water.

Back and forth across the field, now swinging wide to rake the entrenched Federals from either flank, now pressing up to the very banks of the canal in a vain effort to find a shallow spot to cross and end the struggle, the Restless Spirits carry the fight. But the remaining Hotchkiss holds the bridge and the Federal army, whatever its losses, seems determined to stick.

Presently, above the sound of the firing, comes the pleasant sound of a bugle. Juan F. Mantero says it's the Mexican army's officers' call and that it means a conference back of the canal embankment. The firing slackens away for ten minutes and then once more the bugle sounds. It is blowing a charge!

Something tells Pryce that the Restless Spirits can gain nothing by staying for that charge. His men are tired and thirsty and, though game and full of fight, if the right wing of the Federal force charges under cover of a heavy fire from the left wing and keeps on coming, it can destroy the Second Division of the Liberal army operating in Lower California.

The odds are too great. Moreover, night is coming on and he cannot remain on the field and be surrounded after dark. A Restless Spirit doesn't mind getting his in battle, but he does hate to die against adobe wall. After all, discretion is the better part of valor and he who fights and runs away may live to fight another day—in a spot free from embarrassing canal embankments.

Pryce gives the order to fall back and Spike Harrigan pilots the weak and tottering Tomitito across the bullet-swept field to the little swale where the horses are standing. He lifts the Mexican into the saddle, climbs up behind him to hold him on, and trots north toward Mexicali. He looks back as he rides away and sees the Federals charging.

They come on in a half-hearted manner, sweeping down on the Liberals from the right. The Restless Spirits fall back, firing as they go and slowly the Federals advance toward the little swale where lies Shorty O'Donnell's martyred horse. Shorty is backing away with the rest of the boys, when suddenly he remembers his saddle. Back he charges into the heart of the mælstrom, and the Liberal army, devils themselves, pause in admiration of this superdevil advancing alone on the enemy.

Forty men blaze away at him, but he comes on into the heart of the fire. Now he is beside his dead horse, plucking the saddle from the swollen carcass; then, with a sublime and contemptuous indifference to the enemy, he swings his forty-pound saddle on his reckless head, turns his back on the Diaz soldiers and stalks majestically across the field to rejoin his comrades. He throws down the saddle three or four times to join in the volley-firing which checks the Federal pursuit; then picks it up again nor pauses until he has reached the wagon-train.

Paul Schmidt is the last man to come in. Like Shorty, he has gone back toward the enemy to lead off the field a mouse-colored broncho worth probably forty dollars. The horse in question has a slight wound in its foreleg, but to Paul's way of thinking, a forty-dollar cripple is still too good for a rurale.

Down at the ambulance Doc is having his troubles. Williams is unconscious but living, and Doc is cursing and raving as he crawls in among the knot of dead and wounded mules, cutting them loose. Stragglers from the army come up and help him. One mule remains unhurt, but one mule cannot drag the ambulance with Williams in it back to Mexicali, so Rusty Kincaid rides far to the right below the left of the Federals and ropes a mule he finds grazing in the field. He is harnessed to the ambulance with the other mule, Williams is lifted in and, followed by a few ragged volleys from the enemy, they trot back to join the wagon-train.

The wagon that has brought the ammunition to the firing-line is abandoned, with its cluster of dead mules. The mule-skinners cramp their remaining wagons, swing them around and uncoil their long rawhide whips. Cursing, laughing, moaning, wounded mules and horses screaming, wagons creaking, officers shouting, the Restless Spirits retreat on Mexicali.

They arrive there at seven o'clock and twilight is settling over the land. The wagons are unloaded, William Johnson cooks supper just as calmly as he has done on less exciting days and the Restless Spirits

Digitized by Google

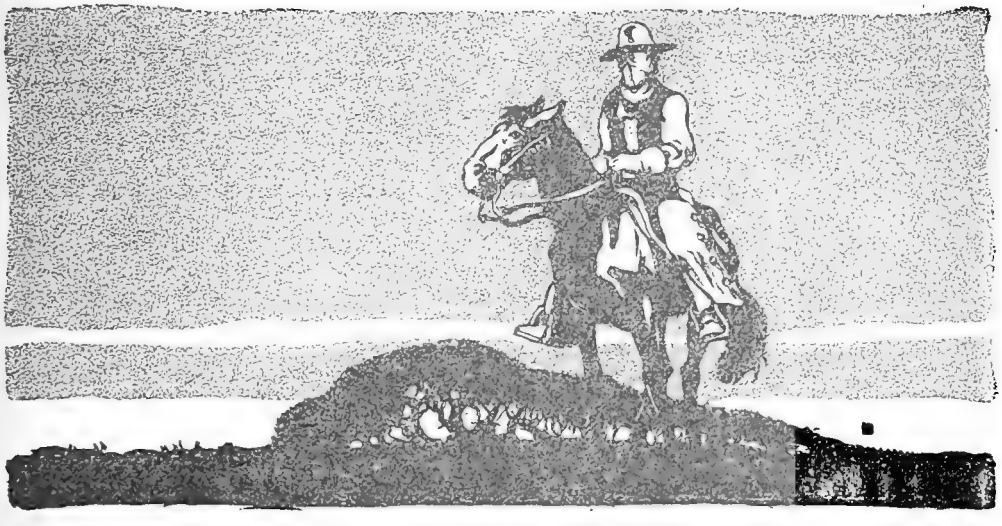
do justice to the meal. Doc takes his wounded to the international boundary and turns them over to the surgeon with the United States troops patroling the border.

THE sun drops down beyond the turquoise mountains over Ensenada way and one by one the stars come out. Over in the United States hospital across the line in Calexico, a smile comes over Tomitito's face when they tell him that he will not die, but the restless soul of the fallen leader drifts faster and faster toward other and more distant scenes.

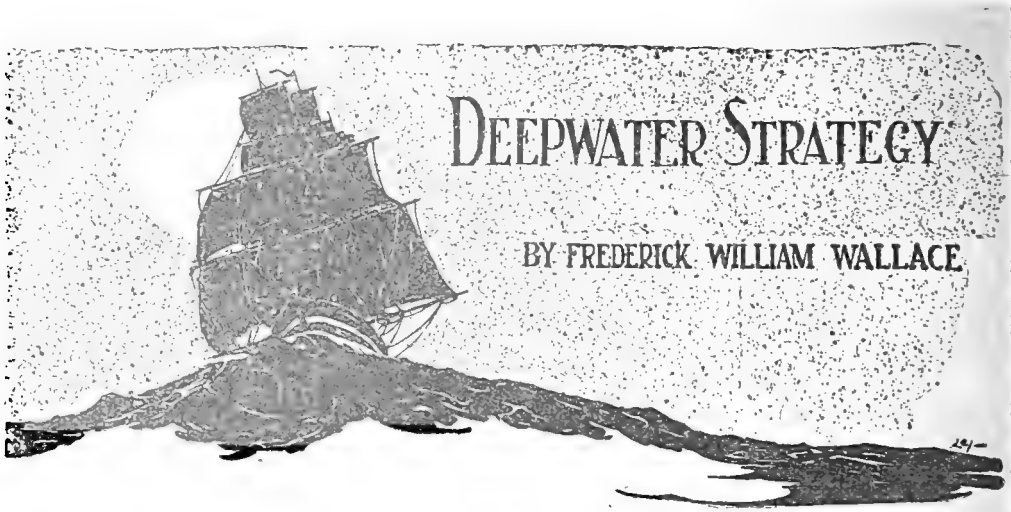
Down in the barley field and in the canal and back of the canal embankment, little knots of Federal soldiers seek with lanterns and matches for their dead and wounded. Their wounded, whose number no one will ever know, they carry away with them on their wild retreat that night on Los Algodones; their sixty-five or seventy dead they bury on the field.

As for the Restless Spirits, they dispose themselves according to their natures and inclinations. Michael John O'Hara crawls into the tall grass back of the depleted horse lines, groans wearily and declares that, "me ould bones ache me all over." Yet he is content, for he has fallen heir to Tomitito's repeating rifle. Shorty O'Donnell pillows his unrepentant head on his reclaimed saddle and reflects that his stock in trade is safe when the war is over. Paul Schmidt bandages his horse's leg with a bandana handkerchief and crawls off to join Michael John. Dynamite Bill camps down with William Johnson and Rusty Kincaid in the pleasant warmth of the "kitchen" and with their tired feet to the flames they sleep the sleep of the conscience-free and the weary. Doc wraps himself in an old overcoat, pillows his young head on his arms and falls asleep in his own ambulance.

One by one they roll into their blankets and presently, to the lone sentry guarding the camp, there comes the long, regular breathing of tired men. Occasionally one of them moans in his sleep or grits his teeth, but soon that, too, ceases and silence reigns over Mexicali. The Restless Spirits are at rest.



Digitized by Google



DEEPWATER STRATEGY

BY FREDERICK WILLIAM WALLACE

"TO make a living at sea a man must keep his weather eye liftin' on the Almighty Dollar, fur the Almighty Dollar spells Prosperity. Without it—life is hell!"

So spoke Scudamore Jenkins, Master of the American ship *Connie Williams*—a craft flying such "sailor teasers" as three skysails. If there had been any money in it Jenkins would have set moonsails and skyscrapers on top of them, aye, even such an unheard-of piece of canvas as a "Heaven Tormentor." As there was nothing more in it, from a monetary point of view, Jenkins contented himself with the skysails.

His acquaintances characterized Jenkins as being a strategist and a diplomat, while his enemies, being more candid, swore that he was "crooked" and a liar, which probably amounts to the same thing in harsher words. He was a well-known character in the West Coast trade and gained for himself considerable notoriety in several risky transactions with the Chilian Government, by smuggling rifles into the "Blancos" of Valparaiso and dodging port charges on going out.

Towboat skippers off the Hook or the Delaware Capes knew Jenkins and cursed their ill judgment when they had the *Williams* in tow, as it meant that they were hauling her into the river for a meager sum and using their own hawser at that. Laying for half a day off the land, Jenkins would hold an auction among the competing towboat skippers and finally strike some complicated bargain, which seemed all right to the successful competitor when he made it, but did not look so good when he thought it out in the privacy of his own pilot-house. It was useless to complain, for Jenkins had been known to revenge himself on offenders by making his ship hard to tow. On a dark night, with a head wind and sea, a towboat will burn a lot of coal when the ship she is pulling has the lee clues of her topsails hauled out.

Jenkins' vessel, the *Connie Williams*, had the reputation of being a fast clipper and at the time this yarn opens she was lying out in 'Frisco Bay, loaded and awaiting a crew. The former gang of foremast hands left hurriedly, minus their wages—the direct result of the Skipper's strategy in making things so hot for the poor beggars on the outward passage that they "jumped" her as soon as the mudhook took the bottom.

About a mile from the *Williams* and swinging to her hook lay the fine bark *Mariposa*—Gallaher, Master, hailing from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and also awaiting a crew. The agents and charterers for these two vessels were a Mr. Sampson and a Mr. Greenly, both prominent business men in 'Frisco and at the same time great rivals. Had they been otherwise, this story would never have been written.

In a discussion at the Maritime Exchange Sampson happened to mention that the vessel he had chartered was the fastest clipper in the Cape Horn fleet and American at that. Greenly overheard the statement and indignantly denied the claim and

Digitized by Google

further asserted that the Nova Scotiaman he had chartered could sail with any clipper out of 'Frisco.

After a heated argument in which figures were quoted relative to the sailing powers of their vessels, the two gentlemen, being well endowed with the sporting spirit, put up a bet of five hundred dollars apiece on their craft for a race to New York—both ships to leave as close to each other as possible and the bet to date from that moment, whether the ships had their crews or not. California was strong on the sporting element in those days and the furor of interest caused by the race among shipping men actuated many other heavy side-bets.

Captain Gallaher of the *Mariposa*—a thick-looking, bearded balk of a man, was willing to race and became quite enthusiastic over the prospect when he heard that two or three hundred dollars would come his way if he won.

"Thar's nawthin' against racin' in th' Shippin' Act," he rumbled, "but to make sartain, I'll see when I get aboard."

Mr. Greenly hid a smile. He was aware of Captain Gallaher's fondness for consulting the Shipping Act — said consultation consisting of a stiff four-finger whack of neat rum in the privacy of his cabin.

"Well, Captain," he said pleasantly, "you get your crew aboard as soon as possible, get away from Sampson's man and drive her all the way. Drive her, y' understand, an' don't let up on your bark until you tie her up to the dock in New York. By the by, Captain, will you step over the street and have a drink?"

"Waal, Mr. Greenly," said Gallaher hesitatingly, "I don't usually tech spirits except as a medicine, but seein' it's in a good cause, I don't mind if I do. I never allow drinkin' on any ship I command. I believe in temperance, sir—not like that feller Jenkins of th' *Williams*, th' low-down swizzlin' dog! That feller, Mr. Greenly, is th' meanest shark an' th' biggest tough on th' Coast!"

Greenly nodded and gazed admiringly at the stiff noggins that poured down Gallaher's throat. After a final caulker of rum, Greenly bade his skipper good-by and returned to his office, while the Captain steered a course for a local boarding-house master.

CAPTAIN SCUDAMORE JENKINS heard the news of the bet with unholy glee and bragged of the sailing qualities of his ship to the admiring Sampson, until that gentleman looked upon the five hundred dollars as his.

"Yes siree," bragged Jenkins, "I've ran down ten degrees of longitude in one day on that packet. She's th' gal ter sail!"

"Ten degrees!" thought Sampson to himself. "A degree is sixty miles—six hundred miles a day—Good heavens!"

Jenkins did not vouchsafe the information that his ten degrees were run down in the high latitudes, where it would total up to only some two hundred and fifty nautical miles in the twenty-four hours.

He had good cause to be jubilant, however, as crews were hard to get in 'Frisco then and he had had the good fortune to secure his through a certain "Boss-eyed" Kelly—a boarding-house master on the Barbary Coast. They were to be sent aboard next morning.

But strange and devious are the ways of boarding-house masters. The Chinaman, for tricks that are wily, has nothing on birds of the Kelly type. By dint of much persuasion and argument in the shape of dollars and whisky, Captain Gallaher got Kelly to transfer the crew of the *Williams* to the articles of the *Mariposa*.

As a clincher on the bargain, Gallaher said, "You know what Jenkins is, Mr. Kelly. You know that he'd do ye up, sure's my name's Gallaher. He's as crooked as a dog's hind leg, an' did I not hear him tellin' th' Captain o' th' *Pole Star* that he intended to get t' windard o' you an' your blood money afore he sailed?"

"That settles it, by cripes!" cried Kelly. "To th' *Mariposa* they go this very night an' Cap'n Jenkins'll never get a hand out o' me without he pays well for 'em! I'll bleed th' swab!"

II

LANYARD, the second mate of the American ship was down in Svenson's saloon exchanging views and opinions on the coming race with the chief mate of the "Bluenose."

McLachlan, with a cheap Saucelito perfecto between his teeth, was speaking: "They say, Lanyard, thet yer ol' hooker is goin' ter give us a race from here t' Noo York!"

Digitized by Google

"Sure thing," replied Lanyard pleasantly. "I'll meet ye in Murphy's on Water Street when ye come in."

"Ye will, will ye?" growled McLachlan. "Let me tell you that the *Mariposa* is built o' slippery elm, an' greased, an' we'll hang a lantern over our starn fur you ter foller with yer ol' Downeast stone-droger!"

Lanyard pretended not to hear, but said sarcastically, "Mac, I often wonder why a well eddicated an' smart officer like you s'd be knockin' about as mate of that ol' hooker, year after year—drivin' her east an' west about an' makin' yer hundred an' forty day passages each way. It's th' drink, I suppose. When th' skipper drinks, th' mate drinks, an' so it goes on——"

Luckily for the proprietor of the saloon, this interesting conversation was cut short by Captain Jenkins coming in and hauling his officer outside.

"What in —— d'ye think?" he rasped. "That low-down feller Gallaher has swiped my crew! He went down an' bribed Kelly t' send them aboard o' th' Bluenose an' every man jack is now in her foc'sle!"

"Waal, I swan!" cried Lanyard in astonishment at the turn of events. "I didn't think ol' Gallaher had th' gumption in him."

"Well," growled Jenkins, "what am I goin' to do for a crew? We'll never get another crew in 'Frisco for two or three weeks now, and us with this race on." Scudamore cursed fervently, his spare, leathery visage distorted with helpless rage.

Both men lost no time in getting down to the fickle Kelly's maritime hostelry and instead of "raising hades" as most buncoed skippers would have done, Jenkins assumed the injured air of a man who has been misjudged and resorted to his great natural gifts of specious argument and persuasive abilities.

In twenty minutes Kelly, the low-browed and sullen, was opening up and ten minutes later he was smiling and apologizing and mentally counting up the dollars that would be his if all went well.

"Yes, Cap'n," he said, "I kin see now that Gallaher was stuffin' me to get th' better o' you. Anyhow, I'm an American an' a good citizen o' th' United States an', as you say, it would not look very good to th' ward boss if he knew I was supplyin' sailors to a blasted Bluenose an' beatin' out my own countrymen. I'll git yer crew back, never fear. You kin just stan' by at eight bells ter-night an' git yer hook up. I'll have yer swabs aboard in time ter sheet home."

III

THE crew of the *Mariposa* had hove their dunnage aboard and, as the bark was to sail at daybreak, they were getting in some sleep before the call of "all hands."

It was a stormy night in the Bay and the man standing anchor-watch on the Bluenose was not aware of a large ship's boat which came out from the San Francisco shore and swung to under the bows.

A moment later two men scrambled up the martingale, along the bowsprit and on to the foc'slehead.

"Who th' ——'s that?" cried the lookout.

"Whist, me lad!" cautioned a voice. "'Tis me, Mike Callahan from Kelly's. Not a whurd, me bhoy, an' 'tis some foine whisky I hev in me fist fur yez."

The sailor took a long pull at the proffered liquor and then asked Callahan what he was after.

"Just a minute, me lad. Follow us down inter th' foc'sle—not a whurd."

The trio crept silently down on the main deck and entered the bark's forward house. The men were soon awakened and, after recognizing the runners, they had drinks all round.

"Well," growled a sailor, "what brings you out here?"

"'Tis a long sthory, bhoys," said Callahan softly, "an' ye'll not need ter talk loud. I guess ye know that th' bark ye're on now is ter run a race wid the American clipper over yander an' there's a big pot of money on it here in 'Frisco. Now, ould Gallaher, yer Skipper, was tellin' Kelly to-day how he was goin' ter win an' that he would hammer th' Ould Bhoy outer youse fellers ef ye didn't make this packer go. Ye know what that means. 'Twill be sweatin' up, tacks an' sheets all th' time; bracin' up an' squarin' away to ivry puff o' wind, an' yer Skipper carryin' on ter th' last minute an' youse fellers havin' ter go aloft in a gale o' wind an' furl yer flyin' kites. I hear he's goin' ter rig stuns'ls out—nice things is stuns'ls—tacks carryin' away an' youse fellers crawlin' out on th' booms an' reevin' new ones—sendin' them up and sendin'

Digitized by Google

them down! Sailor-killin' I calls it!" He paused diplomatically and it was evident that his words had gone home, for the men had crawled out of their bunks and were all attention.

"Now, bhoys," continued Callahan, "th' boss is a soft-hearted man an' his conscience kinder hurt him arter he shipped youse, so he gets busy ter see ef he can get yez another ship. It so happens that th' *Sir Lancelot*, a limejuicer, is wantin' a crew. Her Skipper is a Christian man, an' is offerin' th' best wages in the port, an' sarves grog at eight bells ivry day. Ef belike ye are willin' ter sail ter Europe in th' limejuicer, yez kin slip inter th' boat wid me now an' we'll git clear, an' good-by to a Bluenose hellship, says I, an' I'm thinkin' youse will say th' same."

There was not the least doubt about it. The crew were unanimous for leaving and could not get away fast enough. Hastily packing their kits, they slipped over the side—their ears ringing with instances of Gallaher's brutality.

SHOVING off quietly, they ran with the sea for a few minutes and, after getting clear astern of the bark, Callahan produced another bottle of whisky from under the thwart.

"Have another swig, me lads," he said. "Bad 'cess an' confusion to ould man Gallaher!" The bottle was passed around, emptied and thrown overboard and another broached. Shipping the oars, the boat, laden deep with twenty-two men, swashed through the water in the direction of the supposed Britisher.

"Hark!" cried Callahan softly. "Sure, there's yer mate givin' tongue. Just fancy what a time youse fellers would ha' had wid a man like that!" And upon the wind could be heard the stentorian cursing of the *Mariposa's* mate as he bawled for the anchor watch.

"Pull, bhoys, pull!" And eight men put their backs into the work. In a few minutes, however, the drugged whisky began to act and one by one the twenty men of the kidnapped crew slipped under the thwarts, unconscious.

"Done!" cried Callahan exultantly. "Oi kin imagine th' Bluenose to-morrow mornin'. Light th' lanthern, Murray, an' swing it three times!"

This was done and a few minutes later the *William's* quarter-boat came pulling out of the darkness.

"Have ye got them?" queried Lanyard.

"Ivry mother's son, an' all sleepin' like babes!"

Towing the boat and its drugged freight alongside the *Connie Williams*, the crew were hoisted aboard in bowlines and hove into her foc'sle and the runners pulled ashore.

"Great work!" chuckled Jenkins to the mate, a big Downeaster called Amos Fuller. "Fancy, we've actually shanghaied old Gallaher's crew—my crew originally! Won't the old sweep curse when he finds out!" The towboat came alongside a few minutes later and a gang of men on her came aboard and helped the mates get the anchor to the bows, while the Skipper took the wheel and the idlers passed the hawser down.

When the Heads came abeam, Lanyard went aloft and loosed the lower foretopsail and Fuller did the same on the main and the towboat men walked the sheets home. Under two lower topsails and foretopmast staysail the *Connie Williams* swung out to sea with the wind aft and blowing steadily from San Francisco's sandhills and skyscrapers.

When the mates came aft after dropping the towboat, Captain Jenkins smiled at them over the spokes of the wheel.

"We'll let her drive under these rags till daylight," he said. "The wind'll hold fair to let her run before it and carry us well off the land. Then we'll rouse these jacks out an' make sail. Take th' wheel, Sails, while I go below."

The lights of 'Frisco disappeared in the distance astern as the ship drove out into the open Pacific. Loud were the chuckles of the wily Scudamore as he gloated over the march he had stolen over his unsuspecting adversary.

IV

THE sun had scarce risen above the dim line of the eastern hills, before Lanyard and Fuller were bawling for all hands.

"Rouse an' bit!" they roared. "Rouse an' shine!"

Stupid and dazed, the men turned out of their bunks and exchanged reminiscences of the previous night.

"'Tis a limejuicer we're on," said one,

Digitized by Google

"an' her Skipper serves grog at eight bells ivry day."

"An' he's a Christian besides," said another. "No bullyin' an' hazin' aboard o' this packet. I'm blame glad I got away from that Bluenose hellship."

"Aye, mate," said a big Swede. "I was on one of dem last voyage. Der *Connie Williams* she was, undt der mates hammer der life outer us so dot we runned at 'Frisco. She was a bad schip. Dem Yankees makes you work your wery soul out——"

"Come on thar!" sang out a voice, which to the Swede seemed fearfully familiar. "Heave out all hands an' don't take all day!"

The men crawled out with misgivings. Somehow or other a foreboding seized them that the voice which summoned them savored little of limejuice authority.

The last man out received a vicious kick from Lanyard.

"What for you kick me?" cried the man. "Aindt dis a Bridish schip? I reports to de Consul when I arrive——"

"Ef ye'll cast yer eye aloft to th' monkey gaff ye'll see th' flag ye're sailin' under. Th' ship ye're on is th' toughest packet in th' Cape Horn fleet an' th' Skipper drinks a bucket o' blood fur breakfast. Move along sharp when I shout, or I'll know th' reason why!"

The big Swede gasped. "It bane de *Connie Williams!* By ——, boys, we're in for a defil of a passage! I will kill dat Irish Callahan when I next comes to 'Frisco!"

The men saw how they had been duped and cursed silently to themselves. Being wise by experience, they said nothing but "turned to."

By eight bells the ship was clothed in canvas from flying jib to skysails and booming off the knots in great style. The day was sunshine and clouds and the long rollers raced and sparkled in the sunlight with the shove of a steady northeast breeze.

The clipper bounded over the long offshore swells, dashing the glittering spray over her bows, while her snow-white sails, filled by the wind in great bellying curves, tugged like horses at clue and earring and sheet. The sonorous booming sound of the breeze filled the air as it sang in dull thunder under the foot of the sails. The smell of roasting coffee came whiffing around decks and the mates were feeling good, despite the long vigil they had had without sleep.

Captain Jenkins was in quite a roseate mood and, calling the crew aft, told them, with lurid picturesqueness, what would be their lot if things were not carried out with a jump.

"Ef ye do right, we'll hev a good time together. I will make it a reg'lar yachtin' trip for ye, but ef I git any cussedness, I'll —— Well, I won't spoil yer appetites by tellin' ye that crews useter call me 'Spread-eagle' Jenkins, fur I see that some o' my crews like me an' come back v'yge after v'yge. Eh, Swansen, we had a nice trip together last v'yge?"

Swansen, the big Swede, hastened to say that he had, although his looks belied his assertion.

Jenkins then dismissed them and communed with pleasant thoughts. "I'm glad I bested old Gallaher, for that bark o' his kin travel some. Poor beggar, he's as good as stuck in 'Frisco for the next two weeks."

Running down the northeast trades, the *Connie Williams* crossed the equator at 125 degrees West and swung away on the Great Circle Track for Cape Horn. Each day's observation filled Scudamore with delight, for the gallant clipper reeled off the knots in capital style and sailed as she had never sailed before.

"Even ef Gallaher left two days after me, he c'd never catch me now, for I've carried a rip-roarin' breeze with me all th' way."

V

THE clipper had just passed the fortieth parallel South and was running her easting down in the grip of the great winds of the "Roaring Forties," when a startling surprise upset Captain Jenkin's equilibrium.

A sail had been raised ahead on the port bow and Lanyard, for want of something better do to, had climbed into the foretop and had a squint at the stranger through the long glass.

The sight evidently gave him a shock for he came down in a great hurry and ran aft. Sliding back the companion-hatch, he bawled. "We've jest raised th' *Mariposa* dead ahead, sir!"

Jenkins was adjusting his accounts and figuring up how the profits of the voyage could be judiciously invested, when he heard the news.

"*What!*" he screamed, rising up with a

Digitized by Google

start and spilling the ink all over his charts and papers. "You're crazy! Let me see th' glasses. *Mariposa* be ——! Ye've been drinkin' or dreamin', Lanyard!"

"No, sir," asserted the mate firmly, "'tis the *Mariposa* all right. I recognized them built masts o' hers an' her white-painted yards and stern, an' several other points. I c'd tell her anywhere."

Scudamore scrambled up the mizzen rigging and, sighting the glass, cursed to himself. "'Tis th' *Mariposa* all right, but how in th' name o' all that's holy did she git down here? It sure beats me. Mr. Lanyard," he bawled, "hustle these johns a bit! Sweat up tacks, sheets, an' git everything strung! Git that spare topsail out o' th' locker an' make a save-all out of it! Mind yer helm thar'!"

The identity of the stranger was confirmed in Jenkins' mind when the red ensign fluttered out from the bark's gaff, but she was too far off to read her name and the discomfited Skipper gazed at her with feelings of intense disgust.

A sudden squall drew off his attention for a few anxious minutes and, when it passed, the bark had disappeared in the smother to leeward.

On the run to Diego Ramirez no sign of the *Mariposa* was to be seen, though vessels running the easting were in sight every day.

Off Cape Horn, a sudden squall sent the fore and main royals careering away from the embracing boltropes and in the lift of the blackness, the look out reported, "Bark on the port bow!"

Jenkins jumped on to the rail and, hanging on to the mizzen-topmast-backstay, peered over the gray, surging waters, while a sudden fear clutched his heart again. "Th' *Mariposa!*" he muttered. "By the Great Horn Spoon, an' snorin' along under every kite!"

For a few minutes all was confusion on the *Connie Williams*. Two new royals were got up out of the sail-locker, overhauled and sent up to the vacant yards by a gantline, while the watch strung out aloft and worked with feverish haste, passing the rovings and making the heads of the sails fast to the jackstays.

"Look alive, thar'," roared Jenkins, "an' git them sails set!"

When the royals were set and sheeted home, the ship careened under the great pressure aloft and the backstays set up like bar-iron with the strain.

A sailor named Chileno Pete was at the wheel and he became intensely nervous as the Skipper and mate glanced viciously at him.

"We're haulin' up on him fast!" cried Jenkins. "I only hope th' blamed sticks'll stand th' strain. Mind yer helm, yuh Dago sweep!"

THE helmsman became more agitated and the rudder kicked to the strong push of the sea, almost knocking the spokes out of the fellow's hands. A huge sea was running—the kind that is to be seen only on the wastes of the Southern Ocean—and Chileno was watching them out of the tail of his eye.

He saw a monster curling up behind him and he blanched with fright. The vigilant Fuller noticed it and strode forward with upraised fist. "Steer steady, you scum!" he bawled. As he advanced, the Dago, in an agony of fear, let the wheel go and raised his arm above his head to ward off the impending blow. As he let go the spokes the mighty comber caught the side of the ship, as the Mate, in making a clutch for the wheel, slipped and missed.

Rearing and hissing, it thundered aboard, in tons of white water. *Crash!* Away went the fore- and main-topgallantmasts and gear as the ship broached, and Fuller, with a terrific curse, picked himself up, bruised and dripping, and whirled the spokes round.

The din and confusion for the next hour was indescribable. Jenkins screamed and cursed with rage and the mates bullied and anathematized the crew as they cut the raffle away.

"——!" yelled the Skipper to Fuller. "Why didn't ye leave th' man alone? Ef ye hadn't ha' shoved yer ugly mug at him, he'd ha' bin all right. What use are ye for a Mate? You're only fit for a steamboat sailor you hulkin' lobster-pot hauler! Aye, that's all you're fit for—mate ov a lobster dory! Ye c'd cruise ter T Wharf on Sundays fur a cargo o' stinkin' cod's heads ter bait yer traps with. In future ye kin leave my men alone!"

Then turning to the shrinking Chileno, he bawled: "What d'ye mean in lettin' go th' wheel, you infernal Chilian scum? By th' etarnal, I've a mind ter stamp yer ribs in with my sea boots, I hev! Away for'ard

Digitized by Google

out o' my sight, ye swab, an' take that for a souvenir!" He planted a kick on the sailor's stern that sent him yelping and sprawling on the main deck, six feet below.

The damage aloft was pretty considerable and it took the best part of the day to clear away the wreckage. The mizzen-topmast was badly sprung and had to be fished with spare spars, while sail could not be made on it in anything of a blow for fear it would go altogether.

Disgusted at his ill luck, Jenkins sulked and alternately cursed the Mate and hazed the crew, while the crippled clipper made her way up the parallels under her stump topmasts. In due time Scudamore became resigned to his fate and refrained from driving his ship too hard, in the hope that Gallaher would be gone by the time he arrived in New York. Thoughts of his boasting and the amount of money he had paid away in bribes made him sweat blood.

"What beats me," he muttered over and over again, "is how that old fool managed to git away so quick. Th' *Mariposa* must be a regular steamboat for sailin'!"

VI

ONE day in the North Atlantic Lanyard sang out in hurricane tones: "Cap'n Jenkins, th' *Mariposa* ez comin' up again from th' southard!"

With one jump Scudamore was on deck, and there, three miles to leeward was the *Mariposa.*

"Where th' deuce has he bin all this time?" cried he in surprise. "He sh'd ha' bin in port long ago. What's that she's a sayin', there?"

Lanyard read off the letters of the flags flying from the gaff of the other vessel. "She's askin', 'Are you in distress?'"

"Tell him to go to——!" yelled Jenkins, as he went below, too mortified to look on the sight of his successful rival. By nightfall the *Mariposa* had hauled ahead.

In time, the *Connie Williams* arrived off the Hook and Jenkins was too disgusted to bother bargaining for the tow. "Aye," he growled, "take us inter th' berth for what ye like. I'm sick of this crawlin' tub!"

When the pilot came aboard he sympathized with Jenkins upon his loss and wished him better luck next time.

"When did the *Mariposa* leave 'Frisco?" enquired Jenkins slyly.

"Three weeks after you. You c'd ha' beat her easy if ye hadn't been dismasted."

Jenkins said nothing, but in his eyes the *Mariposa* had the packet ship *Dreadnaught* hull-down for speed.

As the *Williams* hauled into the lower bay, Jenkins saw his rival swinging to her anchor and apparently ready for sea again. In some surprise, he spoke to the pilot.

"Is she outward bound already, Pilot?"

"Aye, she's goin' out with the tide tomorrow."

"By thunder," cried Jenkins, "that's quick work! She passed me outside just ten days ago."

"What! She passed you?" reiterated the pilot.

"Yes, about ten days ago."

The pilot looked mystified. "Ye never could have seen *her* ten days ago. Ye might have seen th' *Mariposa* but not her."

"Eh?" growled Jenkins suspiciously. "Ain't that th' *Mariposa?*"

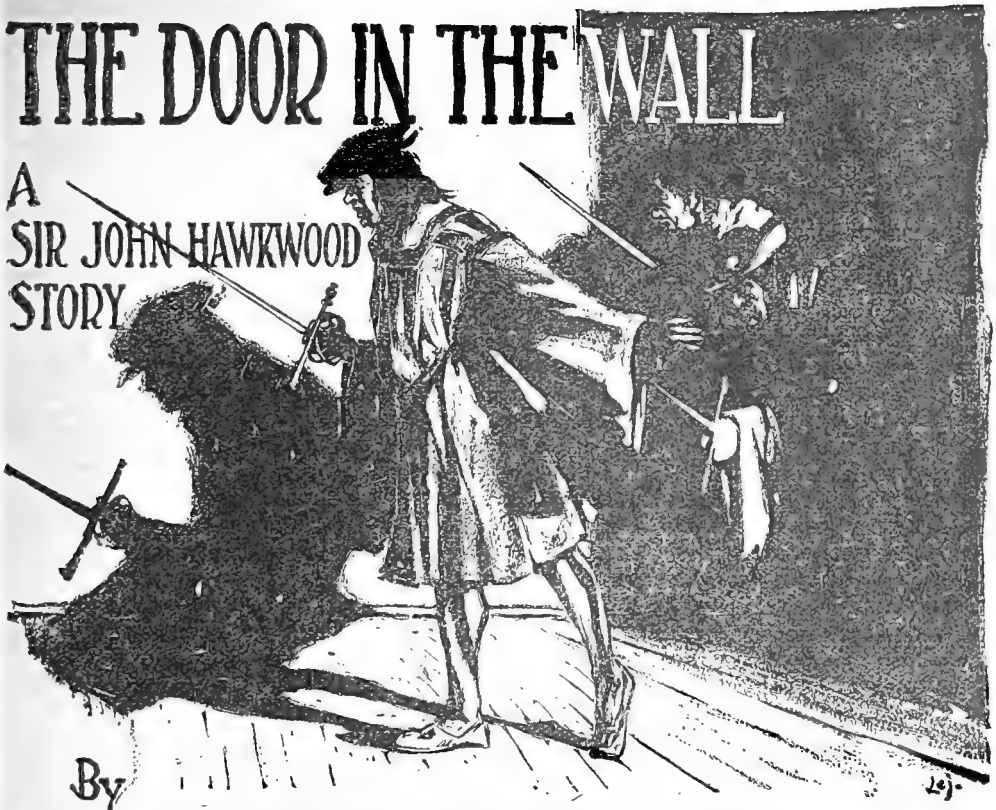
"Why, no," answered the pilot in surprise. "That's her sister-ship, th' *Langosta.* She came in from Valparaiso over six weeks ago. That's the craft to sail——"

Scudamore hastened below to hide his consternation. "May I be whanged for th' most stupid cuss that ever trod a deck! Here I have bin a-chasin' that —— *Langosta*, thinkin' she was th' *Mariposa.* Ef I had only ha' drove th' *Connie* under her topsails, I c'd ha' licked Gallaher an' his Bluenose skite easily!" With a string of bitter oaths, he started to prepare for his coming ordeal with the shipping men ashore —and Captain Gallaher.

Digitized by Google

THE DOOR IN THE WALL

A SIR JOHN HAWKWOOD STORY



By MARION POLK ANGELLOTTI.

THERE was a man once—his name I have forgotten, if I ever heard it—who declared that one can not, in the nature of things, make friends and not make enemies as well; and the words were true ones enough. For example, there was my lord Francesco Carrara, the Duke of Padua. He deserved the love of his subjects, if ever a prince did, and for the most part he had it; but it pleased fate to give him as his deadly foe the very man whose intelligence he needed most, his greatest vassal, that plotting, black-hearted, consummate villain, Alessandro del Santofiore.

For my part, there are times when I could thank heaven fasting that I am no crowned ruler, but only plain John Hawkwood, English soldier of fortune and Captain of the best band of mercenaries that ever bore lances. Nor do I offer up this pious gratitude because the grapes are sour. It is gospel truth, indeed, that no sovereign had ever more bitter enemies than I have had, but then I could deal with mine fairly and squarely, with cold steel, and they seldom troubled me twice; whereas a prince, though as mortal as you or I, with full as many loves and hates, must consider policy and duty and the good of his land—that is, if he be a prince worthy his throne, not like Antonio della Scala and his ilk.

Duke Francesco felt little good-will toward the man who had betrayed him secretly and defied him openly, you may take my word for that. Nevertheless, when I had stormed Del Santofiore's stronghold and brought its master into Padua a prisoner, and he, perceiving that his shrift was like to be a short one, made a humble plea for pardon, my lord, in lieu of following his inclinations, considered several things.

He considered that if Del Santofiore met the death he merited, his great lands would

Digitized by Google

descend in inheritance to his daughter. He considered that this daughter had been married for some years to a powerful Venetian noble. He considered that Venice was the tireless rival of Padua and that, should Del Santofiore's son-in-law possess such wide estates within the Paduan boundaries, the peace of the duchy would surely be menaced. And he pardoned his old enemy and wiped the score clean.

Now all this was of course none of my affair, nor did it concern me overmuch if my lord the Duke, being himself of a noble and generous nature, chose to believe in this peace pact and to assume that Del Santofiore would indeed prove his faithful ally in future, according to the bond. But when, some time after, my lord conceived the mad idea of passing the night at an inn situated on Alessandro's lands and scarce a mile from his castle, I felt that it was full time for me to take a hand in the game and open his eyes to the risk he ran.

The three of us—Duke Francesco, my Irish lieutenant Michael O'Meara and myself—were riding back to Padua in the dusk of a sharp October afternoon, after paying a visit of inspection to one of the Duke's fortresses. Having halted at the dwelling of a friendly noble and broken bread with him, we were late beyond our expectation and it was now plain that we could not reach home and the palace until the night was far advanced.

This prospect and the nip of the night air set the Duke's wits to working. He ended by pointing out to us that there was small sense in journeying through the cold when within a few moments we would pass a hostelry that could shelter us till morning. If it were a rude place, so much the greater would be the zest of the adventure; and it would amuse him to be served by Del Santofiore's people.

AT THIS absurd suggestion I spoke my mind as freely as ever man did yet—and had my trouble for my pains. "Oh, you soldiers are too suspicious, Sir John!" the Duke smiled good-humoredly, when I had paused. "Because Del Santofiore once fought me, must he always be my enemy? Did you not once fight me yourself? The recollection should make you charitable. You do not like this gentleman, nor, to be frank, do I; but he has sworn allegiance to me on the honor of his name and I choose to believe him honest. Besides, he will be quite unaware of our presence at this inn. Why should we fear him, then?"

"My lord," I said bluntly, "you know no more of such gentry than of—let us say the devil, a most appropriate comparison. Trust to me who have seen the seamy side of life. Even to pass through Del Santofiore's lands without a guard, as we are now doing, is an imprudence I should never have counseled. As for this other piece of madness, what proof have we that the old knave might not pause at his inn this very evening and discover you there? And what think you he would do then, knowing that you were utterly at his mercy?"

"Faith, and it's right you are!" O'Meara interposed fervently. "He's the black-hearted rogue and small good could come to us through such a visit! If 'tis your intention to be risking like this the only life I've got, my lord, sure and I'd better have taken myself back to the wealth and title that have been awaiting me these six months in Ireland, as I'm thinking any man of reason would have done!"

It was a sensible speech enough, but I am sorry to say that his expression was far from being in accord with it. On the contrary, it was perfectly plain both to me and to the Duke that he was delighted with the project. However, I had expected no more discretion from him, since it was this very taste for peril which had caused him to defer his departure from Italy for so long.

The three of us changed words for a time, each stubbornly set in his own belief; then the Duke, whose patience was, truth to tell, no better than another's, ceased smiling and narrowed his eyes. "To-night I sleep at the inn yonder. Is my decision clear?" he asked haughtily. "That is well—for I am the master, I think, Sir John Hawkwood!"

"Aye," said I surlily, "and better for you if you were not, and if we could drag you back to Padua and put you under guard of my soldiers until it pleased the saints to give you back your sanity!"

He laughed at that, for what he called my soldier's bluntness always amused him. "I fancy you would get little help in such an undertaking from O'Meara, who is madder far than I," he retorted. "Come, I know why you are so black. You had planned to spend this evening among the roses with Lady Hawkwood! Ride on to Padua, then,

Digitized by Google

if you choose, and Messer Michael and I will enjoy the adventure by ourselves."

I shook my head gloomily. "If you are bent on such folly, my place is with you. But, in the name of heaven, grant me at least one boon. Keep your rank and title to yourself and do not let the people of the inn know who it is they entertain!"

"Very good!" he answered after a reflective pause, with the air of the man who makes a marvelous concession. "You shall have your way, my friend. Now, are you satisfied?"

"Aye, satisfied as Damocles was, when the sword hung over his head!" I returned grimly. And then, since I had wit enough to see that the case was hopeless, I fell into silence and we set spurs to our horses and galloped toward where the distant lights were glimmering through the dusk.

II

THE inn kept by Del Santofiore's people was situated at the crossing of two roads, one of which ran in the direction of Padua, while the other led steeply up a hill to where Alessandro's fortress-castle perched like an eagle among its crags. A mean-looking, roughly built place, it was by no means inviting; but we were all weary after the day's ride, and the prospect of a fire and a meal was tempting enough to cheer us considerably as we dismounted and hastened in out of the darkness and the cold night air.

It appeared that there were no other guests and we got a warm welcome from the wizened, shrewd-eyed little host and his dark, silent, hard-mouthed wife—a rather unprepossessing pair, it struck me, and much the sort of fry that old Del Santofiore might have been expected to harbor on his lands.

For an instant I wondered uneasily whether they had seen me four months earlier when I marched this way with my White Company and hailed their master back to Padua to answer for his rebellion. Should they recognize me, it was more than likely that they would guess the Duke's identity—indeed, for aught I knew, they might have seen him a dozen times. However, I was relieved to find that they showed not a glimmer of recognition of any of us and appeared to feel no other emotion than content at the prospect of sheltering three opulent-looking travelers overnight.

There was a fire roaring in the chimney-place and we promptly gathered around it and began to warm our chilled limbs, the Duke and Michael enjoying themselves meanwhile to an extent which I confess I found somewhat exasperating.

"An adventure, Sir John, a true adventure!" the Duke kept repeating, as he glanced about the mean little room. Perhaps to one reared in palaces it was, though for my part I had passed too much time among such scenes to find them particularly enlivening. Mine host had vanished immediately after our arrival, but his wife now appeared with our supper and we fell on it with a good appetite, while Michael loudly voiced his satisfaction with the meal.

"Sure and it's yourself can cook to the king's taste, no less!" he informed the woman. "Never did I see a better roast than the one I'm eating now! Come, tell us, are you growing rich at your trade? And do you find him a good master, this Del Santofiore on whose lands you dwell? 'Tis mesilf am a stranger to Padua and know little of its nobles, but I'm hearing on all sides naught but good things of your master. A rare nature, they tell me; gentle, charitable, most faithful to those above him. And is it true, now?"

"A good lord," the woman assented, without a flicker of expression on her hard face. If she suspected his irony, she was far from showing it.

"But the Duke of Padua," I suggested, with a side-glance at my lord, "scarce merits the loyalty of such a one. A tyrant, many people say, a spendthrift, a proud, addle-headed rogue who plunges his duchy into troubles of all sorts! I know nothing of this, you understand; I have only heard it. What is your mind in the matter?"

She glanced at me quickly, then lowered her eyes. "I can not say, signor," she told me composedly. "I have never seen him. Should he come here to my inn to-night and be pleased to conceal from me his name, I would be none the wiser!"

On the last word she left the room and went back into the kitchen and we who remained, stared open-mouthed into one another's eyes. Had she recognized us? I thought that she had, the Duke maintained that she had not, and Michael declined to commit himself.

"Ye never can tell with a woman," he said solemnly, seizing the opportunity to

Digitized by Google

voice his favorite refrain. "Wait till our host comes back and I'll soon reach the bottom of the matter. Bless us all! and what's this?"

It was nothing else than the sound of galloping hoofs in the near distance. They approached rapidly, there was a noise of voices without and an instant later the door was thrown open and there appeared on the threshold, with a pair of black-visored, scowling troopers behind him, a white-haired, hawk-nosed, keen-eyed gentleman in a plumed hat and gold-embroidered cloak, whom with a sinking of the heart I recognized as Alessandro del Santofiore! In a flash I realized that the very thing I had foretold had come to pass and that the fat was in the fire with a vengeance.

THERE remained to us but a single chance—that our enemy had paused at the inn on some affair of his own and would depart without recognizing us. This was not to be. At sound of the opening door the Duke had turned in his seat and as the eyes of the two men encountered I knew that all hope was lost.

Instinctively I reached back and loosened my sword, half rising from the table as I did so; but what followed gave me a surprise and made me feel rather ashamed of my haste. Del Santofiore stood a brief instant on the threshold, gazing at us in apparent stupefaction. Then his look turned to one of delighted welcome and, springing across the room with an agility remarkable in a man of his years, he bent his knee before the Duke and fervently kissed his hand.

"Welcome, my lord, welcome!" he cried. "I had not known that you were so near me; a thousand pardons that I am so late in greeting you! But why pass a night in such a place as this, when my castle and all in it are at your service? I am but now on my way home after a day afield. Ride with me, then, and let me house you suitably!"

He turned to O'Meara and me with a beaming smile, apparently quite forgetful of the not so far distant day when he had ridden to Padua a prisoner in the midst of my White Company. "All friends of my Prince are welcome here," he informed us, "and none more so, Sir John Hawkwood, than you and your brave lieutenant!"

"Is it so, indeed?" Michael demanded quite audibly. "I recall a time when you hid most rarely what tenderness you felt for us! Arrah, go on with you, me friend! Do you think to be fooling an Irishman with your tricks?"

For my part, I left the greeting unanswered, being in an agony lest the Duke should accept Alessandro's invitation and ride to the castle with him. To my relief, however, there proved to be limits to my lord's recklessness. "I give you all thanks for your courtesy, signor," was his gracious answer, "but what you suggest is impossible. My friends and I are weary from riding and are going to sleep within the hour, while early to-morrow we must be on our way home. At some other time I will most gladly enjoy your hospitality. Meanwhile, it has afforded me pleasure to see you for even so brief a moment." And he smiled into the fierce eyes of the old man as composedly as if he did not know himself to be in grave danger. He had courage, Francesco Carrara, and if at times he courted peril too much, even in the thick of it he was nobody's fool.

Del Santofiore assented with protestations of deep regret and then, while O'Meara and I stood one on either side of the Duke anxiously awaiting his departure, he flung a thunderbolt into our midst by announcing his intention of not leaving us at all. "The people of the inn are most honest and trustworthy, my lord——" he began.

"Foul 'fall their faces, then, for lying most plausibly about their characters!" O'Meara muttered.

"—but nevertheless, when my sovereign honors my lands with his presence, I can surrender to no one else the task of guarding him," Del Santofiore concluded, ignoring the interruption. "I will pass the night here by the fire with two troopers; we will not sleep, we will not close our eyes! Ah, my lord, let me prove my devotion, let me make amends for my late fault to you and show my gratitude for your kindness! You consent?"

Had I stood in the Duke's shoes I would have replied that to me a guard of lions and tigers would be preferable to one composed of Del Santofiore and his men; and I think the old knave read my thoughts well enough in the look I gave him. Nevertheless, it was perfectly plain that since we were in his power we had better not start a quarrel, and I was not surprised to hear my lord answer graciously, thanking him for his offer and accepting it with every appearance of trust.

Digitized by Google

III

SELDOM in my life have I been more pleased at anything than I was that night when the Duke arose and announced his intention of going to bed. The evening had been a well-nigh insupportable one and had it been prolonged, I fancy it would have ended in a general *mêlée*, in the course of which our ill-assorted quartette would have cut one another's throats.

Michael, who possessed no more prudence than was to be expected from one of his nation, had been doing his utmost to exasperate Del Santofiore by a series of covert allusions to his late rebellion and downfall; that gentleman had retorted by veiled attacks on me, and I had defended myself with the best wit I could muster. The Duke alone, though amused and annoyed by turns, had maintained a pretense of serenity and sought to keep the peace. An hour or two of this congenial chatter had exhausted us and we were all visibly cheered at the thought of separating for the night.

Del Santofiore guided us above-stairs in person and ushered the Duke into a room which was, he declared, the best in the place, and later conducted O'Meara and myself into the one next it.

"Good dreams, Sir John," he said, lingering an instant on my threshold, "and never fear but that I will guard our Prince well!"

"You had better do so," I responded, with a shrug of the shoulders, "for if any harm came to him there are some of his friends at Padua who would know the reason for it!"

He scowled at me blackly, then turned away. "You think yourself a clever man, Sir John," he snarled, letting his venom appear openly for the first time that evening, "but there may yet come a time when you will find that others besides yourself can play a winning game!" And with that, before I could answer him, he was gone, slamming the door behind him.

This vague threat did not trouble me much. Indeed, I was growing easier and easier in my mind, for surely, I thought, had he intended us any active harm he would not have waited so long before attempting it.

Weary but contented, I stretched myself on the rude straw pallet that did duty for a bed and found it as much to my taste as my soft couch in the palace at Padua. "Praise heaven that my lord showed wit enough not to pass the night at the old rogue's castle!" I yawned to Michael. "That would have been the end of us all, I think. Well, to-morrow we shall be home again and this mad jaunt will be over!"

He shook a languid head on the pillow. "'Tis the divil of a queer evening we've had, nevertheless," he murmured sleepily. "A meal at an enemy's inn, a pair of innkeepers whom that old spalpeen is after saying he trusts, which is a good reason for suspecting them, I'm thinking. Aye, and a night passed with Del Santofiore watching over us, save the mark——" He halted on the very borderland of slumber for a final thrust. "And there's another queer thing that sticks in my mind. Our friend there was after saying he was on his way home, you recall; but I heard the hoofs of the horses in the distance and I could swear on my soul 'twas *from* the castle and not *toward* it they came, which proves——"

His voice trailed into silence. He was asleep, but he had left his words behind him and I found that they had banished all my desire for repose. Propping myself on my elbow, I thought steadily for a long time. I remembered that the inn-keeper had vanished immediately after our arrival. Perhaps he had recognized the Duke and hurried to Alessandro's castle with the news. Yes, that would have accounted for the arrival of our old enemy just as we finished our meal! The result of my musings was that I rose, took up my sword-belt from the floor, buckled it round me and, bending over O'Meara, shook him ruthlessly awake.

"What is it you're wanting, anyhow?" he stammered. "Wirra! wirra! can you not even let me have my dream in peace?"

"Hush!" I muttered, my hand across his mouth. "Listen to me, Michael. There is deviltry here, I am sure of it. We have been blind not to suspect sooner. Heaven send we are not too late! Now follow me and do it without noise, if you hope to see Madonna Francesca again this side of the grave!"

Being wide awake by this time, he obeyed me as if it were all the most natural affair possible and, inch by inch, testing each board lest it should creak beneath our feet, we stole across to the door. Very slowly I unbolted it and swung it open. Before us stretched the dark line of the passage and I tiptoed noiselessly across it to the stairs, thrust out my head and stared down into

Digitized by Google

the lower room where Del Santofiore had informed us he meant to mount guard. The fire, though nearly extinguished, still lit the place with a faint glimmer and I saw exactly what, in view of my awakened suspicions, I had expected to see. There was no more sign of either Alessandro or his troopers than there was of the dead!

This settled it. There was mischief afoot, that was certain, and I could think of but one way to cope with it. Rejoining O'Meara, I beckoned him to follow me and we stole cautiously to the Duke's door. I put my hand on it and it swung open. Yes, he had left it unbolted, quite as I had expected! And now, as I could judge from the sound of regular breathing that greeted me, he was fast asleep! Had he not been a ruler and therefore unaccustomed to such predicaments as the present one, I would surely have dubbed him an imbecile and, as it was, his complete unconcern toward his danger irritated me extremely.

FOR a little I stood motionless, accustoming my eyes to the darkness. The couch itself was in the shadow, but part of the room was illumined faintly by the moonlight that poured through the window. Very slowly and cautiously I made a tour of inspection and found, I must say, little enough to reward me. There was but one door and it had a firm bolt; the paneled walls seemed strong and solid; the window was high above the ground and barred. How any one could enter I was at a loss to conceive, yet I was anything but easy in my mind.

When I had ended my search, I knelt down by the Duke's pillow, stretched out a hand to seize his shoulder and had the misfortune to drive it against his eye instead. Naturally enough, he started up with an oath, and as the situation was urgent I ventured to silence him in the same fashion I had used with Michael.

"It is I, Hawkwood, my lord!" I hissed, my hand still firmly over his lips. "I have come to implore you to sleep in my chamber and to permit me to sleep here. There is danger to-night and I have discovered a way to meet it."

Well, he was anything but grateful for my solicitude, and he let me know as much frankly. There was no danger, he maintained, and he was out of patience with my forebodings. Never had he passed such a night. Was it not enough that his couch was hard as any stone and must I rob him of what little slumber he could get?

And throughout this tirade I kept my hand over his mouth, so that he could formulate the words only in gasps; for I did not mean that he should rouse the house unless it were over my dead body.

"My lord," I muttered desperately, "do you remember Castagnaro? I won Verona for you that day and I saved your life as well. If you are grateful, pay me now. Go into my chamber and bolt the door and leave me to my devices here!"

I had touched the right chord at last. "Have your way. 'Tis a strange return for such a service, but each man to his taste," he grumbled, and rose from the couch. I begged him fervently to walk with care, but he certainly did not take much pains to do so. However, he reached my room without too much uproar, and, when I had heard him bolt the door behind him, I shut O'Meara and myself into the chamber and began my preparations.

These were of the simplest. I piled the covers of the couch into such shape as resembled, in the shadow, the body of a man; then I stretched myself in the gloom near it with my drawn sword beside me, motioned to Michael to do the same and hissed in his ear a vengeful command for silence. He obeyed me to the letter, for he went promptly to sleep. I was not sorry, knowing as I did that he could not possibly have long endured the tedium of the watch without attempting some exchange of ideas.

If any man thinks it a pleasant diversion to lie in the dark waiting for he knows not what danger, I wish him the same experience I had that night. Frankly, it was no agreeable one. Beneath that roof, I could have sworn it on my hope of heaven, was some black plot for the sudden removal of the Duke and the soldier who was the Duke's right hand. A web had been woven round us, and it was drawing closer and closer beneath the cover of the darkness.

The fact that I did not see how any one could enter a barred and bolted room made me but the more uneasy, since it lent a sinister note to the affair. The face of old Del Santofiore rose before me, lined, bitter, fierce-eyed. He was a most consummate villain, I knew that, and something whispered to me that to-night he played to win.

The minutes dragged by, the night wore

Digitized by Google

on, and still nothing happened. The house was as silent as death, never a board creaked, not a breeze sighed without. I lay very tense and alert, my eyes continually roaming from side to side of the chamber, always seeking for a sign of the peril that would presently come upon me. Yet, I say it to my shame, no man can remain watchful forever, and at last my vigilance began to relax a little. It was very late now. The moonlight was fading. Perhaps after all I had deceived myself. Perhaps——

Another instant and I believe I would have been in a doze. My eyelids were falling and beneath them I gazed dreamily at the one spot on the opposite wall where the moonlight still lingered. Praise the saints that in that drowsy moment I looked there and not elsewhere! The one glance was enough, for it showed me what sent sleep fleeing and brought me back to my senses with a bound.

Was I mad, or was it true that beneath my eyes the wall was swaying outward? A cold chill swept over me; I pinched my arm to convince myself that it was not a nightmare, and the sharp pain that followed proved conclusive. The thing was mysterious and ghostly, more hair-raising a thousand times than the clash of arms and the sound of spurs would have been.

Not a sound broke the stillness of the night, but slowly and steadily, under the rays of the moon, the panel swung out and a black void was revealed behind it! And then I understood. There was a secret door in the wall and our foes were coming through it!

IV

ALESSANDRO del Santofiore was the first of the invaders to appear. As I watched, he stepped lightly into the room and paused for an instant, waiting until the two troopers had emerged in their turn from the dark hole. The sight was no very reassuring one, for each man carried a drawn sword in his hand and, if ever I read murder in my life, I read it then in the fierce, pale, twitching face and gleaming eyes of my enemy and the grim, dark countenances of his followers.

Nevertheless, I was now quite calm. I put out my hand and grasped O'Meara's shoulder and he stirred slightly, then stiffened and lastly drew a sharp breath. Satisfied, I released him. Among his other admirable qualities he numbered the power of waking with all his wits about him and I knew he was already perfectly alive to our peril.

Signor Alessandro tightened his grip on his sword-hilt. I could see the muscles of his hand grow tense in the moonlight. He began to steal forward, testing each board before he trusted it with his weight. After him, dark and noiseless, came the troopers. They were approaching the couch in the shadow, where they believed that the Duke lay asleep. As for me, I did not stir, though the mounting anger in my heart made quiescence well-nigh impossible. Francesco Carrara had pardoned this man, had treated him with the generosity of a noble and princely soul. In return he was to be stabbed in his sleep at a roadside inn! Had I followed my own fancy I would have flung away my sword, sprung upon Del Santofiore and buried my fingers in his throat.

He was very close to me now, crouching, creeping. A moment more and I felt his quick, hoarse breathing almost against my cheek. He bent toward the couch, raised his hand, leaned forward to strike. And then I sprang to my feet and knocked up his sword with mine.

On the instant bedlam reigned about us. Del Santofiore started away with a choked cry of furious bafflement and I pressed him backward in a frenzy of rage, allowing him small time to collect his wits. "Ah, would ye then, ye murdering divils!" I heard O'Meara shout with an exultant laugh, and knew that he had fallen with enthusiasm on the two troopers. Doubtless they were picked swordsmen and desperate fighters, but I did not think the two of them would get beneath the Irishman's guard.

For my part, though to fight in the dark is no child's play and I do not choose it when it may be avoided, I have enjoyed few things as I enjoyed that combat. Since to have killed Del Santofiore too easily would have lessened my pleasure, I was glad to find that he possessed an unusual skill. Our blades crossed and recrossed, ringing together sharply. Yes, he was clever and cool too. Already he had recovered from his fright and was beginning to attack as well as defend. I recalled grimly that he was said to have passed much of his life in France. Well, certainly he had studied there with a good fencing-master,

Digitized by Google

but not with one good enough to save him from his deserts that night.

Through the clash of steel I could hear Michael laughing and jesting as he fought, but I had small leisure to heed him. Del Santofiore's breath was coming fast; he was learning what manner of swordsman he had against him and his courage weakened as I drove him steadily back. "Gilberto! Andrea! Aid me!" he panted over his shoulder to the troopers.

"Is it your cutthroat friends you're wanting? Sure, and they're engaged elsewhere and most urgently!" O'Meara mocked from the other side of the room.

Del Santofiore gasped, and I will not deny the sound was sweet to my ears. "It is best, before you come to stab a sleeping man, to be quite sure that he is not awake," I said grimly, as I parried his thrusts. "Above all, it is best when the man chances to be Carrara of Padua, a great and noble Prince who has true friends as well as cowardly, lying foes——"

"Sir John!" he panted. "Sir John Hawkwood!" Until I spoke I think he had not been sure who was at his sword's point, and with the coming of this knowledge all hope of victory plainly left him.

"Yes," said I, "Sir John Hawkwood, who now intends to kill you like any dog, as you would have killed your master! Faith, you are a rare noble, you that play such a part as a bravo of the streets would blush to own! I have wasted too much time on you already. Say your prayers, if you can call them to mind!"

Again he gasped hoarsely. He was facing the window now. The moon, shining across our swords, gave me the light I needed for my thrust and I feinted once, twice, three times, and ran my blade through his body. He cried out chokingly, then flung up his arms and fell.

WRENCHING my weapon free, I sprang over to O'Meara and found my advent to be a most timely one. He was fighting most brilliantly and enjoying himself to a quite unreasonable extent, but the two against him were no pygmies and one of them had swung round behind him and was about to plunge a sword into his back when I interfered. Thereafter, for a time, each of us fought his own man.

The uproar had apparently aroused Duke Francesco from the sleep of the just in the next room and he was now pounding on our bolted door and clamoring for an admittance which neither of us had leisure to give him. However, the end was rapidly drawing near and soon I heard the Irishman's opponent go to the floor with a crash. "Let in the Duke!" I called. And as Michael drew back the bolt and flung the door open I got beneath my man's guard and brought him down, none too soon, either, for he had been attempting a thrust which would, if successful, have spitted me like any eel.

A moment later the Duke was standing beside me, holding my hands and peering at me anxiously, while the innkeeper and his wife hesitated on the threshold, she raising a candle over her head and staring at the litter of bodies, he whey-faced and extremely weak-kneed.

"Sir John!" my lord was crying. "Are you wounded? Where is Signor Alessandro? And, in the name of heaven, what does this uproar mean?"

Now, though I had been anything but idle during the few minutes, my wits had been full as busy as my sword and I believed I understood all that had befallen us that night. Nor could I resist the temptation to play the part of the clever man who unravels the mystery. "Signor Alessandro is there, my lord," said I, pointing dramatically to where he lay huddled on the floor. "As for the meaning of the occurrence, it is what I propose to discover now."

Striding suddenly across to the doorway, I halted beside the startled innkeeper and his wife and keenly scrutinized their faces in the hope of discovering which of the pair was best suited to my purpose. The woman, though pale, confronted me with steadiness, but the man was a pitiful sight in his terror and I promptly addressed myself to him.

"Listen to me, my friend!" I said harshly. "The gentleman yonder, he in the center of of the floor, is the Duke of Padua. Ah, you did not know? You are astonished? That is somewhat strange, is it not, when you recognized him on his arrival here and straightway took yourself off to inform Del Santofiore of his coming?"

"We, my lord? Never, as the Virgin hears me!" the woman cried, in a desperate effort to divert my attention. But I never took my eyes off her husband's pasty face.

"Ah, you choose to lie, do you?" I demanded. "You had better beware! If

Digitized by Google

you speak the truth it may be that the Duke will show you mercy. If you do not, I swear on my soul that this is your last hour on earth!" And I flashed my bloody sword close before his eyes.

He flung himself on his knees in a panic. "Pardon, pardon, my lord!" he moaned. "Yes, I confess it—it is true!"

"Turn your head!" I commanded sternly. "Look at that door in the wall. You are accustomed to lodge those of your guests who carry fat purses in this room, is it not so? And in the night you enter and relieve them of their abundance of this world's goods, eh? And Del Santofiore, for whom no villainy was too mean, knew of the trade you ply and permitted it, and in return for his complaisance taxed you from your spoils."

The man fairly groveled before me. "It is true!" he shuddered. "But how have you guessed this, my lord, in the name of the saints?"

"In place of asking questions," said I, "you had best go thank heaven for its mercy toward you! You know what Del Santofiore planned for to-night—the murder of the Duke, the killing of me who guarded him. But you do not know, I fancy, what he planned for to-morrow. Fools! He would have cried out in horror, he would have haled you to Padua and given you up to justice as the murderers! Do you see? Your master would have been rid of his enemy and at no cost to himself, for on you would have rested the blame of the bloody deed!"

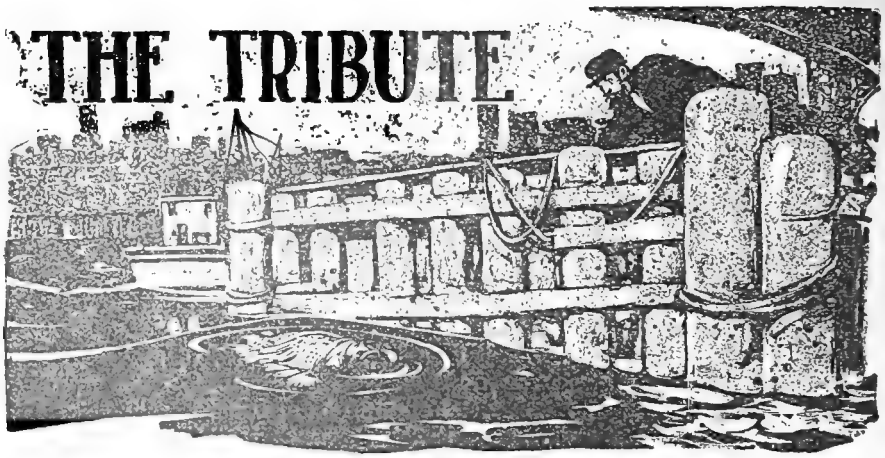
Turning from their horrified faces, I confronted the Duke, who was still standing in the center of the room, a good deal more serious than his wont and obviously as much impressed by my revelations as I could have desired. "And now, my lord," said I, "this neighborhood is far too near Signor Alessandro's castle to be a healthy one for us. Let us go saddle our horses and ride back to Padua as quickly as we may!" To which advice, for he was advancing with outstretched hands and I saw that he meant to waste precious time in thanking me, I added hastily, "And, perhaps, you will now admit that I was in the right when first you urged this jaunt upon me and I told you it would come to no good end!"

My ruse succeeded even better than I had hoped. Duke Francesco started back and glared at me for an instant with an expression of actual fury, which presently melted into a laugh half-angry and half-rueful. "You would have been more than human, I suppose, had you resisted the saying of that," he admitted. "But you can deem yourself lucky that within the hour you have saved my life! Well, I will be generous and confess that your prophecy has proved good. Now we will return to Padua as you suggest, and to-morrow I will proclaim Del Santofiore to have been a traitor and confiscate his lands. As for you, I am going to set you a task which I well know you will find a pleasure. I will let you deal with our friend's son-in-law from Venice, who will surely have ensconced himself in the castle yonder before we can reach it with our forces!"

Which task in the event I duly carried out. And when I had brought the matter to its conclusion there was scarce one stone of Del Santofiore's stronghold left standing upon another and the Venetian lord had perished in the siege.

Digitized by Google

THE TRIBUTE



BY PAUL CRISSEY

A GULL, dingy with the smoke of the city, cocked his head on one side and soared by the curious bundle gently washing back and forth just inside the breakwater.

The dying wake of a steamer, clearing the center pier, swept suddenly inshore and lifted the soggy roll against the water-soaked posts; then, quite as quickly, swept it back again.

The bridge watchman, ambling along the wharf, saw it, shuddered and walked rapidly away. Five minutes later the pneumatic tube ejected a news-bulletin in the office of the *Dispatch*.

Cullom, the city editor, unfurled the paper and hastily read it. His glance missed his spectacles and shot sidewise about the editorial room. One man, with his feet cocked upon his little desk, was all that met his eye. Cullom sighed.

"Meyers!"

The reporter brought his feet to the floor with a thump and walked briskly toward the desk.

"Yes, sir."

"I took you on here because you seemed original. You said you had certain theories about running down news—isn't that right?" He waited a moment, then he continued, "Still have 'em?"

Meyers nodded.

"Why shouldn't I?" he asked. "I haven't had a chance to prove that they're wrong."

"Well, you get your chance now," Cullom grinned. "There's no use going to the police for much of this story. The truth of the matter is that the Department has shut down on us. We'll have to dig up the stuff on the outside. The police just found the body of a man floating off the Government pier. The face had been disfigured. No identification marks. Nobody's missing. See what you can do with some of your theories."

"What's the matter with the police?" Meyers asked.

"Engledew's story on the sergeant at the Tenth Avenue Station taking tribute from the levee people has queered us for a while. It'll blow over, but not in time for us to get that story to-night. That's all."

Meyers left the room mentally cursing himself for airing his views in public, including his argument that "deduction" was a necessity for a reporter.

"I might see the Captain of the Fifth," he told himself; "maybe he doesn't care about that story last night."

Three minutes later he was seated in the office of the Fifth Precinct Station.

"How th' —— do you suppose I know anything about it?"

Captain Cleary was a sallow-faced, leather-skinned individual who had gained his present position through means unknown but not unsuspected by the public.

"I ain't seen the body even," said he.

"Where is it?" asked Meyers.

"In Beeman's, next door. But you ain't goin' to gain nothing by looking at it. Probably you ain't never seen a dead man

Digitized by Google

before?" He thrust his narrow face close to the reporter's.

"No," admitted Meyers, "I haven't. But then, there's just a chance that some clew of identification has been overlooked."

Captain Cleary laughed outright.

"You guys make me sick," he said bitterly. "Don't you suppose that if there'd been anything doin' in that line Donlin or Loomis 'd seen it?"

MEYERS sauntered out of the room. He was practically up against it. In the cool of the morgue, however, he fast came to himself. The possibilities of the mystery struck him forcibly and at the same time the determination to make good his boasts fairly swept him off his feet. He looked at his watch. He had until four o'clock that afternoon—just eight hours in which to clear up the mystery, write his story, and get in for the sporting extra.

"Is this what it was wrapped in?" He turned to the undertaker.

"Yes. I took it off so's it'd dry. Looks to me as if the color had run."

Meyers took the thing in his hands. It was a red and blue hammock, green fringed, well worn, with many of the strands of cord broken. Evidently the murderer of that silent thing on the table before him had taken his time preparing his victim for the plunge into the river.

"How long do you think the body was in the water?" asked Meyers.

"Just a few hours—five or six, at the most. His watch stopped at ten—probably when he struck the water."

"Take the sheet off. I want to look at the clothing."

He steeled himself for the ordeal, then, with faculties alert, bent over the silent form. The water from a nearby slab dripped monotonously and the sound echoed down the narrow room. Carefully the reporter examined the man's clothing. There was not a sign, not a mark to reveal the make of the suit or the name of the laundry to which the bedraggled shirt had been sent. Quite suddenly his eye caught something on the white front of the pleated shirt. He looked at it intently for a second and then straightened up while a smile lit his face. He turned to the morgue-keeper.

"Nothing else beside the watch came with the body? No purse, gloves, a flower in the coat button-hole or a—pair of spectacles or eye-glasses?"

The man shook his head.

"It's all here. Maybe there was something left in the stretcher."

Meyers nodded. A few moments later he was in the wagon-shed at the rear of the station rummaging about on the floor of the ambulance. The stretcher, still damp, contained nothing. He went up-stairs to the Captain's room.

"How'd you find out about the body?" he asked.

Cleary looked up, eagle-eyed, and muttered something under his breath.

"Some one called up," he replied briefly. "He saw the body floating by under the bridge."

"What time?"

"About seven this morning," the officer answered carelessly.

"Know who it was?'

"The bridge tender, —— it!" he roared. "Now I've told you a dozen times that I don't know anything about it. Get out of here! When there's anythin' new on the case Sergeant Flynn'll give it to you at the desk. Don't come in here again!"

The reporter looked thoughtfully at the "chief" for a moment, then he leaned over his desk and said, almost impulsively:

"Look here, Captain, you know mighty well why the *Dispatch* is getting the cold shoulder. They've given you orders from up above; but you think this over. I'm going to get that story to-day if I have to wear the floor of the squad-room out waiting for it. You guys seem to think you're the only ones who know anything. I tell you there's many a reporter who has helped a copper out on a case."

"Is that so?" sneered Cleary. "Get out!"

MEYERS stepped slowly from the room, the sense of defeat enraging him almost beyond control. He went down the stairs to the landing where the telephone operator sat. One more try he made before leaving the station-house. Every telephone call that came to the station was distributed from here to the various officers in the building. Meyers tapped the operator on the arm.

"Hello, Billy, where was that seven o'clock call to the 'chief' from? Remember?"

Digitized by Google

"The river find? It came from Fuller, and Fuller's night watchman. He told the 'chief' that he saw the body washing back and forth just inside the old wharfing under the bridge."

"H'm," mused Meyers. "The Captain said differently. By the way, Billy, that old wharfing runs along the river just the length of the block the station is in, doesn't it?"

Billy nodded.

"I'll give you a tip, Meyers. If that body was found *inside* of the old wharfing, you can bet your coin that the murder took place not far from this vicinity."

"Why?" asked Meyers, keenly alert now that there seemed to be a clew.

"Just this way," confided the operator. "The old wharfing extends the length of this block only and there is not one single opening between the piles large enough to admit a body from the main stream. I've tried to get the 'chief' to put me on the bureau, but he can't see it. I ain't going to waste my talents on him. Figure it out for yourself. Go look at the old wharf. If a body was found between the shore and the old line of posts, it was put there and didn't drift in. And, as the old wharf is only as long as the block, the body was dumped in at some point in this block. Go and dope it out for yourself."

But Meyers had already flown. Captain Cleary had lied. The telephone message had come from a watchman and not from the bridge-tender. And the body had not been floating down stream when it was sighted. It was evident that the Captain was keeping the news from the *Dispatch*. Meyers cursed him softly, as he skipped down the stairs.

There was one little clew that might lead to something more definite. He walked to the big veranda back of the station-house. He smiled. It was the lounging-place for the officers and it overlooked the bare little yard where some of the squad spent their spare moments playing baseball.

A hammock, stretched from a post to a hook sunk in the brick wall, met his eye. Hammocks being in Meyers' mind, he stepped across the porch and examined the cording of the one there with minute detail. He noted the place where the maker's name was woven in, then he recalled to mind that there had not been a single distinguishing mark on the hammock that was drying in the morgue.

A step sounded behind him, and Flynn, the desk sergeant, emerged, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief.

"Hello, Meyers!" gasped he hoarsely, for through his bulky throat very little wind could find its way. Flynn always talked in a hoarse whisper. "The Wheezing Sarge," many of the men called him to his back.

"Howdy, sarge!" Meyers dropped the edge of the hammock. Flynn chuckled.

"Recognize it?" he croaked.

"Same old hammock, isn't it?" asked Meyers innocently.

Flynn shook his head and winked like a pig in the sun.

"Not a word of this in the paper, mind," he warned, "but some duffer sthole our little swing last noight, right from under the oyes iv the cops, mind ye!" Flynn laughed in a series of wheezes.

Meyers looked at him eagerly. With apparent lack of interest, though his alert mind was in a whirl, he asked, "Where'd you get this one?"

Sergeant Flynn, again with one sunken eye, winked.

"Bechune ourselves," he answered hoarsely, "we found it here this mornin'. Some o' th' byes must o' bought it from the second-hand man 'round th' corner. But a' that's not for the press, mind ye! It's too foine a joke on th' byes."

Meyers, enlightenment coming over him, caught at the shred of hope. "What nerve!" he muttered to himself, then aloud:

"Sarge, what was that other hammock like?"

"Plain red and blue, with a green fringe," answered the sergeant. Mopping his face, he returned to the squad-room.

"Whoever the murderer was," Meyers whispered admiringly, "he had his nerve with him when he stole the hammock from a police-station to wrap his victim in!"

BY OPENING the gate in the rear of the station yard, he managed to reach the wharfing behind which the body had been found. He had a clear idea as to the site of the find and, once there, he soon discerned the exact spot because of the small crowd of morbidly curious people gathered about it.

Meyers took in the scene at a glance. None of the men present were reporters from rival papers. Assuring himself of that

Digitized by Google

fact, he wandered aimlessly about in the crowd. Finally he saw the watchman, now surrounded by a crowd of admirers listening to his description of the body. Meyers slipped up behind him.

"Come over here a minute!" he ordered, and half dragged the watchman from among his hearers.

"Did you 'phone in to the police about the body?" Meyers asked.

The man nodded his head.

"They had four cops here five minutes after I saw the thing floating in the water. I was the first one here. The thing was a-tossin' back and forth and says I to myself, when I seen what it was, 'Tom, ye——'"

"Wait a minute!" Meyers put a restraining hand on the shoulder of the man. "I want to know the facts."

"Are ye from the police?" interrupted the watchman.

"Just came from there," replied Meyers honestly.

"Then I'll give you this," muttered the watchman, as he fumbled in his pocket. "I ain't goin' to get mixed up in no murder cases if I can help it." His coarse hands were rummaging in his pockets.

"What is it?" inquired Meyers. "A pair of eye-glasses?"

The man looked up at him in sudden surprise. Then he laid in the reporter's hand a pair of nose glasses, one lens of which was slightly chipped. The chain had been broken and the pin attachment was gone.

"When they picked him up," said the watchman slowly, "this dropped out from the stretcher. I tried to give it to one of the cops, but he shoved me back and told me to mind my own business."

But Meyers was closely examining the two circles of glass in his hand. He held the lenses up before his eyes. One of them was stained a dull red, almost black, and the other was a queerly-ground glass of exquisite fineness.

Here was the clew for which he had been searching! He whipped out his watch. It was nearly noon and he had much to do. He wrapped the glasses carefully in his handkerchief and put them in his pocket. A moment later he was scrambling along the path to the rear of the police-station. In less than half an hour he sat in the outer office of the largest optical supply company in the city.

"I want to see one of your expert lens men. I am Mr. Meyers of the *Dispatch*."

The clerk led the way through a series of swinging doors and finally deposited him, with a brief word of introduction, beside the person he was seeking. Meyers briefly stated his errand.

"Now, take a lens like this, for instance," he said finally, holding up the pair of lenses so that the man before him could see only the one that was clear of stains, "whose make is that? Can you tell?"

The expert gave it a slight glance.

"It is ours."

"Who was it made for?"

"I'll have to look that up. Wait a minute."

HIS slender fingers sought a bell button on his desk and in response to a sharp thrust a boy appeared in the doorway.

"Bring me the files of the special ground K-X glasses."

As the messenger disappeared he turned to Meyers: "It won't take but a moment. There are few such lenses made nowadays."

A moment later the boy was back. Meyers leaned forward, while the expert ran swiftly through the files.

"Here it is," he answered finally. "One K-X lens ground fine, with the left 75-25 wide bridge and——"

"That's enough," interrupted Meyers. "Now what's the owner's name?"

The expert shook his head.

"I can't tell you that in this case," he replied. "But Doctor G. G. Harden, 21 Tenth Avenue, sent in the order."

"Thanks," breathed Meyers, and a moment later he was out in the street and climbing into a taxi-cab.

"Any drug-store!" he shouted.

"The motor-car careened around the corner and stopped not ten feet away from the door of the building which he had just left.

"Wait here!" shouted Meyers.

Once inside, he grabbed a telephone and called his office.

"Hello!—hello! This is Meyers. I'll have that story for the extra—do you hear—for the extra. And say," he interrupted, as the city editor's voice uttered an exclamation, "hold that edition if you can—what? That's a lie! Cleary is all wrong—the body hadn't been in the water more than six

Digitized by Google

hours! Do as you like about that, but you'll run that story when I bring it in—all right, go ahead and use it! What?—No, of course I don't know who the murderer was yet—all right, laugh if you want to, but——" He slammed the receiver down and bolted from the drug-store.

"Twenty-one Tenth Avenue!" he cried to the chauffeur as the machine plunged forward. It was two o'clock when he burst into Dr. Harden's office.

"Who ordered these glasses of you?" he gasped.

The oculist glanced at them and sank back comfortably into his chair.

"You must pardon me," he drawled, "but I never give my patients' names promiscuously. What is wrong?"

Meyers was raging.

"The man who ordered these glasses of you is dead—been murdered! Now if you want——"

But the Doctor was sitting bolt upright. "Not at all," he apologized, "not at all—I didn't understand—I wouldn't interfere—I——"

"Quick!" ordered Meyers. "Look the name up!"

"It is——" the oculist whispered the name into Meyers' ear.

"No!"

"It's a fact," returned the oculist, "though I don't like to have my other patients who are—er—respectable, learn of it. One would never have guessed that he——"

But Meyers was gone. The net he had been weaving was all clear, from one side. He had worked step by step. He knew the dead man's name. He found a motive for the crime, but the murderer?—He stopped there.

"Take it cool," he urged himself. "Don't get excited!"

He was near the station-house again. A sudden determination to make one more trial there lured him and he entered. The Captain was not in his office. Meyers walked on through the squad-room to the back porch. He seated himself in the hammock and stared out across the yard at the muddy river.

THE whole case revolved before his eyes. If he could get the man who had stolen the hammock from the station porch—once again he found himself forced to smile at the superb nerve and cunning of a man who would get his murderous tools from a police-station. Suddenly he took his hand from the hammock.

With his heart in his throat and with a picture of that awful figure in the morgue, with its dripping clothes before his eyes, he rose slowly and gazed at the hammock in bewildered silence.

It was damp!

At that moment a spot on his cuff attracted his attention. He pushed back his sleeve. The smear on his white linen was red—much like blood.

The murderer has returned it!" thought Meyers in a flash, though his better judgment soon pushed that idea aside.

"The colors have run in the hammock," he told himself and it gave him an inspiration. He felt in his pocket to make sure that the eye-glasses were there, then he jumped from the veranda to the back yard.

A piece of newspaper, slightly crinkled, rattled under his foot as he touched the ground. Eagerly the reporter picked it up. It was covered with fine red lines, made by the cords of the hammock. Meyers smiled to himself and examined it more carefully; then suddenly he tore off one edge of the paper.

"He carried it in this from the morgue," he told himself. "Now to see if any one has missed him!"

Springing lightly over a back-fence gate that was fastened with a piece of rusty wire, Meyers dodged up the alley and turned into a dilapidated yard some five houses east of the station. He knocked at the door of the house. After a long silence it opened. A slatternly figure appeared.

"Is 'Silver' Jones in?" asked Meyers.

The woman shook her head.

"They pinched him last night and kicked the rest of the bunch out. I ain't seen any of 'em since."

She slammed the door in his face and he stared at it for a moment. Turning, he walked rapidly back to the station.

The front office was filled with reporters and plain-clothes men waiting for the night detail. Sergeant Flynn's hoarse whisper rose above the other voices. Several of the men called to Meyers, but he turned down the corridor and knocked on the closed door of Captain Cleary's room.

"Come in!" rasped a voice. Meyers stepped quickly into the room and closed the door behind him.

Digitized by Google

"Oh, it's you again, eh?" Cleary's voice cheered suddenly and he smiled a wry smile that distorted his unhappy face.

"Yes," retorted the reporter diplomatically, "I had to come back. No use trying to find it out. You fellows have got all the dope."

Cleary leaned back and rubbed his hands. A sudden look almost of relief filled his face, but he fixed his bright eyes on those of the reporter before him. Meyers had dropped into a nearby chair.

"That's more like it," said Cleary confidently. "Now, Meyers, I ain't got anything against you personally, but it's a heap more decent to let the Department handle that stuff. Even if the Big Chief ain't goin' to let us give you nothin' till this trouble blows over, you know as well as I do that you can get the other boys to split up on the news."

Meyers nodded.

"That's mighty decent," he said in a trembling voice, "after the way I acted this morning. But you see," he continued, getting boyishly confidential, "I had sort of let on that I knew something about the finer points of detective work. I had bragged a lot about how I could tell—er—finger-prints and so on. I've got to make good, Captain, or they'll run me out of town."

Captain Cleary laughed.

"It took me ten years, my boy, to get on to the finger-print business, but it's simple—now for instance——" He reached across the desk and grabbed Meyers' hand. He pressed the thumb into an ink pad and then took an impression on paper.

"Now in these lines," said Cleary, his professionalism coming to the surface, "there's a difference——"

"Here," interrupted Meyers, apparently deeply interested, "take a print of your thumb so I can see the difference!"

THE Captain stabbed his broad thumb into the ink pad and then on the paper.

"Now, you see, these thumbs will always print alike. They——"

"Always?" asked Meyers.

"Always," answered the chief.

"Wait a minute!" broke in Meyers and, going suddenly to the door, he stepped out into the hall. Feverishly his hands sought the paper he had found in the back yard. He glanced at it hurriedly, then pulled the eye-glasses from his pocket and took them from the handkerchief in which they were wrapped. One glance was sufficient. He crammed them all into his pocket and opened the door of the Captain's room. The dry-faced man was looking out of the open window. His face was hard, but he smiled faintly as Meyers entered again.

"Where's those prints?" he asked.

Meyers, his heart beating violently, walked close to the side of the Captain.

"We won't need them," he said slowly. Then, briskly, though his voice shook, he asked, "Captain Cleary, why did you kill Silver Jones after closing up his games?"

The older man turned like a shot in his chair and his eyes burned through the reporter.

"—— you!" he screamed. "What d' you mean by that?"

Meyers edged away.

"You did!" he cried, "I've got the proofs—the thumb-print proves it! Why didn't you book him last night when you pinched him—you know—and I want to know?"

The Precinct Captain, glared at the reporter. His face worked into harsher lines.

"It's a lie!" he protested angrily.

Meyers shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the use, Captain," he asked soberly. "I've got you. I told you I'd find the man. You were clever, all right; but you shouldn't play detective and give instructions on thumb-prints!"

The man across the table wasn't listening. Slowly and surely he had crept nearer to Meyers and, as the latter spoke, he had got almost within an arm's reach. Seeing the impending danger, the young man made an attempt to get to the door, but the wiry form of the Police Captain blocked his way.

"I want 'em," he growled—"those prints—you can't prove anything—I——"

"I can even prove that you are holding up every crook like Silver Jones as well as every poor devil of a woman in this district for a cash bounty each month. Yes, I can and I will! We've got the goods on you in the office. You were next after the sergeant of the Tenth. We know! Now come across with it!"

But the answer never came. With a wild cry the Captain flung himself at the reporter and would have caught him had

Digitized by Google

not his arm brushed off the telephone from the desk. It dropped to the floor with a noisy clatter and Meyers, breathing heavily, watched the little man before him. How was he to get out of this room to write his story now? Suddenly the clock struck.

"Three-thirty!" breathed the reporter to himself.

The Captain stopped and a look of weariness came over his face. It was supplanted, as quickly, by a look of cunning. He was edging toward his desk. Meyers, keeping a space between them, worked slowly to the door. Without warning the officer straightened up.

"Stop it!" he ordered harshly and the reporter found himself looking into the muzzle of a thirty-eight.

One chance remained. Meyers took it. With a wild leap he mounted the desk and then jumped—a long jump, but he managed to clear the window-ledge. The next second there was a crash of glass and his arm struck out the lower sash! Several pedestrians turned to look. The policeman sunning himself before the station saw him land heavily in the alley. With a spring he was out of his chair and in full pursuit. Meyers saw him coming, however, and made off at full speed down the alley.

Somewhere a bell rang violently and there was a muffled crash behind him, but he did not heed it. The policeman was coming on, blowing his whistle as he ran, but Meyers intuitively shunned the streets and made off down one alley after another.

WHEN, finally, gasping and breathless, he rounded the last corner and dived head first into the doorway of the *Dispatch* building, he caught a glimpse of his pursuer half a block away. He was too close to wait for an elevator. Meyers leaped up the stairs, bleeding, breathless, excited. He flung himself into the editorial room of the *Dispatch* just as Cullom, the city editor, was about to release the sporting extra.

"I've got—I've got it!" he shouted. Wait—for God's sake, Cullom, wait!"

The city editor was over his desk in a flash.

"Here! Engledew! Harry! Quick!"

They propped the gasping Meyers in his chair while two men climbed in front of the typewriters close at hand.

"Now," said Cullom quietly, "get it out! Johnny, tell the foreman to hold two columns, right on the front page, open for a Number Two head. Go on, Meyers!"

"Lock the door!"

Some one snapped the latch on the door and there in the midst of the little group of reporters Meyers, with his face bleeding, gasping painfully for breath as he spoke, told the story of one more professional crook of the city sent to a slab in the morgue. He gave the details—as much as he knew—of the way in which Captain Cleary of the Fifth Precinct police-station had killed the man who finally rebelled at paying his regular bounty each month. In the midst Cullom stopped him.

"Now are you sure," he asked, "that Cleary killed Silver Jones?"

Meyers looked at him with blazing eyes.

"It's all right, Cullom!" said a voice from the telephone-booth. "The Fifth just telephoned in that Cleary has shot himself!"

"I knew there should be eye-glasses," whispered Meyers to the men at the typewriters. "I saw the pin-holes in his shirt front. He was a swell dresser—Silver Jones. Man on the beach—night watchman—found the specs—traced them down—oculist gave name of Jones—I accused Cleary——"

His voice broke off with a queer sob and he straightened up. The typewriters were clicking like carbines on a skirmish-line, and from the bowels of the building came the dull roar of the presses getting off the country extra.

Meyers sat erect and his face, bloody and dirty, seemed to smile.

"He switched hammocks, but he did it before the old one was dry—left a thumb-print on the newspaper he wrapped it in and there was a thumb-print on one lens of the glasses. I got him to fool with me and made him print his thumb on a piece of paper on his desk. Then I accused him—God!" Meyers shuddered. "I was scared half to death. I thought he'd kill me!" His eyes blazed: "But I was right! I was right in my theory, wasn't I, Cullom?"

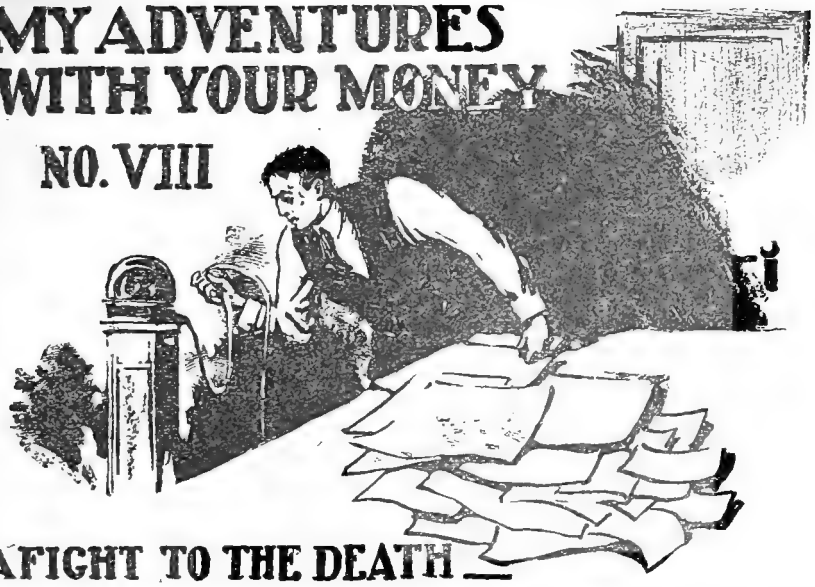
The man with the gray hair mixed with black nodded.

"You were right, Meyers, you were—Catch him, Harry! He's fainted!"

Digitized by Google

MY ADVENTURES WITH YOUR MONEY

NO. VIII



A FIGHT TO THE DEATH—

THE DRAMATIC STORY OF B. H. SCHEFTELS & CO.

BY GEORGE GRAHAM RICE

EDITOR'S NOTE—With this article a dramatic story comes to its dramatic climax. The tale of any man's life holds in itself something of interest to his fellow-men; the tale of a life so full of incident and color as that of Mr. Rice, so alive with insights into human nature and so closely identified with two things lying very close to the human heart—the getting of money and the spirit of adventure, such a tale carries an appeal to every one who is not dead to the world around him and fenced off by self-raised barriers from the human beings among whom he lives. In this, the last article of the series, the results of all Mr. Rice's labor and experience shape themselves into a campaign which promises him a rich reward, only to send him crashing, at the very moment when victory flutters at his finger-tips, into the gulf of ruin and defeat. That this stirring drama is played out in Wall Street, the heart and center of our financial system, lends it an added zest with all those who retain some slight interest in the little pieces of paper and the little round, flat pieces of metal that economists coldly speak of as a medium of exchange. "*My* Adventures with *Your* Money"—well, that is still another reason for reading it.

IN ADVENTURE for November I described the structure and methods of B. H. Scheftels & Company's organization, the big mining, brokerage and promotion concern whose spectacular finish was the Wall Street sensation of 1910. For 19 months the Scheftels corporation was the live wire of the mining-share markets. Throughout I was in general charge of its publicity and promotion measures. This brought to me intimate knowledge of many important manipulations that were going on during that period and leading up to it. I saw my opportunity. Using the publicity forces under my command, I exposed all shady deals. I performed the job with the cold impartiality of a surgeon with his knife. I played no favorites. I saved investors millions. In the conduct of the crusade I and the Scheftels corporation incurred the merciless hostility of powerful and unscrupulous interests. In reprisal they broke us on the wheel.

This story has now to do with the Scheftels corporation *in action*. It travels through a maze of intrigue, duplicity and malignity on the part of men in high places, ending with the fall of the curtain on the Scheftels activities and revealing the terrifying powers that can be exercised by financial giants for the crushing of any man or set of men who have the temerity to stand between them and the public.

THE Scheftels corporation, a merger of two firms—Nat. C. Goodwin & Company of Reno, and B. H. Scheftels & Company of Chicago—came to New York to conduct a brokerage and

Digitized by Google

promotion business. With offices right in front of the Curb Market on Broad Street, with a publicity machinery of its own that was without a peer in its line, and with a knowledge of mines obtained by personal contact and wide experience in the field, the corporation was rarely equipped. It had in these an asset possessed to the same extent by no other house in the Street.

In professional quarters it was regarded as an interloper from the day it set foot in the financial district.

The first offense the Scheftels corporation committed was to reduce its commission rates. This move set the whole Curb against the enterprise. But as the play progressed it proved to have been unimportant in comparison to the unspeakable crime of telling the truth about other people's mining propositions that were candidates for public money. The Scheftels corporation had laid it down as a set rule that an established reputation for accuracy of statement was a great asset for any promoter or broker to have. To gain such prestige the principle was followed in the nation-wide publicity which emanated from the house that, no matter whom the truth hurt or favored, it must be told always, when publishing information regarding the value of any listed or unlisted security. Space in the Scheftels Market Letter or the news columns of the *Mining Financial News* was unpurchasable.

The enforcement of this rule was a wide departure from prevailing methods. But that didn't make us hesitate. Having felt the speculative pulse for years, I knew its throb. The public, after losing billions of dollars, were becoming "educated." The rank and file of mining promoters—high and low—in Wall Street still believed that "one is born every minute and none dies." But I and my associates didn't. An uneducated public had been unmercifully "trimmed" in scores of enterprises backed by great and respected names. Speculators were ravenous for the truth. We decided to give it to them. We gave it to them straight.

This publicity system brought about the ruin of the Scheftels corporation through the powerful enemies it made. The policy was right all the same. Persisted in, nothing was or is better calculated to strengthen the demand for all descriptions of meritorious securities. The Scheftels corporation was the pioneer in the exploitation of this principle as a fundamental and underlying basis of brokerage and promotion. In pioneering this policy, however, the Scheftels company was sacrificed to the prejudices and wrath of the old school of promoters.

THE FIRING OF THE FIRST GUNS

BEFORE the Scheftels corporation was on the Street three months it almost came a cropper. On the strength of excellent mine news it purchased nearly 300,000 shares of Rawhide Coalition in the open market, up to 71 cents per share. A determined drive was made against the stock by mining-stock brokerage firms which had sold it short. Bales of borrowed stock were thrown on the market by the crowd operating for the decline. The Scheftels company took it all in. Letters and telegrams were sent broadcast by market enemies urging stockholders to sell. A powerful clique had been losing big sums on the rise.

The Scheftels company published advertisements calling upon margin traders to demand delivery of their certificates. This expedient proved of small utility. The brokers continued to hold off deliveries to customers and sold and delivered to us all the stocks that they could borrow or lay hands on. The continued selling finally made inroads on the Scheftels corporation's cash-reserve to a point that forced it one day to stand aside and leave the market to the sharpshooters. That day, in a few hours, approximately half a million shares of Rawhide Coalition changed hands out of a capitalization of 3,000,000 shares. The corporation's loans were called. This forced it to throw large blocks of stock on the market. A sharp break ensued. That was just what was wanted by the interests which were gunning for us. They covered their short sales at great profit.

In the midst of the mêlée the Scheftels company tendered a Stock Exchange house of great prominence, which had loaned it for the account of a Salt Lake firm of brokers $12,500 on 50,000 shares of Rawhide Coalition, the money to take up the loan. A representative of the Stock Exchange house sheepishly stated that his firm had loaned part of the pledged stock to out-of-town brokers. He asked for time. Under threat of dire consequences the Stock Exchange firm bought stock back from us in the open

Digitized by Google

market that afternoon to supply the deficiency, and then made delivery of this stock back to us in lieu of that which they had parted with. It had been specifically stipulated by the Scheftels company when the loan was made that the certificates must be held intact and that the stock must not be loaned out or sold while the money loan was in force.

This experience was repeated frequently during the Scheftels career on the Curb. It cost B. H. Scheftels & Company more than one million dollars, during the nineteen months of its existence, in giving loyal market support, in times of "professional" attack, to the stocks it had fathered or promoted and felt moral responsibility for.

Time and again the Scheftels company found among stocks delivered to it, against purchases made in the open market, the identical certificates it had pledged with loan-brokers as collateral for loans, and which had been hypothecated by it with the specific proviso that the certificates were not to be used. It opened our eyes to one of the most commonplace practises, not only on the Curb, but also on the Stock Exchange. Hardly a failure occurs on any of the Exchanges or on the Curb that does not reveal customers' certificates, which were originally pledged with the understanding that they were not to be "used," in the strong-boxes of others.

The first grievous offense of the publicity forces of the Scheftels corporation against Wall Street's "Oh-let-us-alone" promotion combine was a wallop in April and May, 1909, through the Scheftels market literature, at Nevada-Utah.

The combination which owned control took with bad grace the strictures on the property. We heard an awful underground roar. At that time the price of Nevada-Utah stock was around $3. The Scheftels Market Letter said that there was probably not 30 cents of share value behind the property. The price immediately began to crumble. It has been tobogganing ever since. The stock at the beginning of September of this year was quoted at 37½ to 50 cents.

Such a thing as printing facts which would enlighten stockholders and the public as to the actual value and condition had not before been heard of when such enlightenment ran contrary to the plans of strongly entrenched promoters on the Street.

The campaign against Nevada-Utah, therefore, directed widespread attention to B. H. Scheftels & Company and the *Mining Financial News*.

Following the Nevada-Utah disclosure, the Daily Market Letter and the Weekly Market Letter of the Scheftels corporation and the *Mining Financial News* took a good, strong, husky "fall" out of the La Rose Mines Company, capitalized for $7,500,000. The La Rose owns one of the greatest producing mines in the Cobalt silver camp. A market scheme was in progress, with La Rose as the medium, and W. B. Thompson, of Nipissing fame, as a chief manipulator. We called a halt to the game when the price reached a "high" of $8.50, and saved the public a huge sum of money. Under our campaigning the stock declined to $4, a decrease of $6,750,000 in the market value of the capitalization. This made W. B. Thompson and his associates the implacable enemies of the Scheftels company and myself. We didn't worry much. We were catering to the public. Indeed, we were pleased with our work.

Following this incident, the Scheftels Market Letter and the *Mining Financial News* took a smash at a mining-stock deal in which W. B. Thompson and the Guggenheims were jointly interested. It was the now notorious Cumberland-Ely-Nevada Consolidated merger. Later the merger was enlarged and took in the Utah Copper Company, or rather the Utah Copper Company took in the others, and the Scheftels propaganda found another opportunity to do a great service for the stockholders of Nevada Consolidated.

Our attack hurt the Guggenheim reputation among investors all over the country and contributed to reduce their influence over the large stockholding body—more than 6,000 men and women—of Nevada Consolidated. Though finally successful, the Guggenheims were sore from the lashing and exposures to which they had been subjected. As for the Scheftels company and the *Mining Financial News*, they had still further established the honesty and value of their publicity service.

A promotion called Ray Central Copper Company was a precious enterprise against which we trained our publicity guns and fired several effective broadsides. The effort of the promoters to connect with the public purse here would not have been half so sensational if men of lesser prominence

Digitized by Google

were identified with the operation. In our "bear" publicity on this one we minced no words. In doing so we again hit another powerful interest—the Lewisohns.

LATER the exposure by the *Mining Financial News* and the Scheftels Market Letter of market manipulations of the Lewisohn-controlled Kerr Lake still further "endeared" the members of these two organizations to that powerful faction, and more closely cemented the ties of fellowship between the ruling powers.

Keystone Copper, another Lewisohn "baby," was put through its courses on the Curb while Kerr Lake was being played in a stellar rôle. The deal in Keystone was an unobtrusive little thing, but awful good as far as it went from the one-sided point of view. I turned the searchlight of publicity on Keystone.

The Scheftels Market Letter and *Mining Financial News* disclosures in the interests of speculators and investors regarding Nevada-Utah, La Rose, Cumberland-Ely, Nevada Consolidated, Utah Copper, Ray Central, and Kerr Lake were sensational enough, but they by no means included all of the work in this line. During 1909 this publicity literature took in practically every important mining company whose shares were traded in on the New York Curb. The unpleasant truths these forces were obliged to tell from time to time touched the delicate sensibilities of many leading lights of the Street. These had grown accustomed to an unvarying diet of sweets.

It would seem that their appetite for saccharine provender would have become cloyed and that a change would be a grateful relief. It was not. The truth was distasteful. It interfered with the noble industry of mining the public and it cut down the profits of that end of the game. In keeping up the record of day-by-day market and mine developments these publicity agents punctured many a rainbow-tinted balloon. Very frequently they gave to the public its first definite and intelligent idea of real value behind promotions and in properties. Where market prices represented an overplus of hopes and expectations the truth was told. The aim was to take mining speculation out of the clouds and plant its feet firmly on earth.

In this laudable effort we ran counter to the plans of the mighty. We also violated the vulgar unwritten rule of some of the Wall Street fraternity—"never educate a sucker." Our publicity work caused a readjustment of judgment of market values, besides those already mentioned, on such stocks as Inspiration, First National, Butte & New York, Trinity Copper, Micmac, Ohio Copper, United Copper, Davis-Daly, Montgomery-Shoshone, Goldfield Consolidated, Combination Fraction, British Columbia, Granby, Cobalt Central, Chicago Subway, and sixty to eighty others.

The live wires of our publicity service blistered the flesh of the Guggenheims, the Thompsons and the Lewisohns, and perturbed their widely diffused affiliations, connections and allies, including John Hays Hammond, J. Parke Channing, and E. P. Earle; also Charles M. Schwab, E. C. Converse, B. M. Baruch, United States Senator George S. Nixon, George Wingfield, Hooley, Learned & Company, many other New York Stock Exchange houses, a group of powerful corporation law firms, a noted crowd of influential politicians, Curb stock-brokers who had grown fat executing manipulative orders for the "inside," bankers who carried on deposit the cash balances of the mining companies, and even J. P. Morgan & Company, who were partners of the Guggenheims in their Alaska ventures and were for a time said to be meditating a merger of the copper companies of the country with those controlled by the Guggenheims as a nucleus.

THE STORY OF ELY CENTRAL

BY KEEPING speculators out of stocks that were selling at inflated prices, the Scheftels corporation and the *Mining Financial News* became endeared to a great popular moneyed element. The public was saved huge sums of money.

This, however, only carried out the negative end of a grand idea. The affirmative demanded that the Scheftels corporation must put its followers into a stock or stocks where they could actually make money.

The Scheftels corporation was on the eager lookout for a genuinely high-classed copper-mining proposition. It found what it was looking for in Ely Central, a property that is sandwiched in between the very best ground of the Nevada Consolidated, is bordered by the Giroux and occupies a strategic position in the great Nevada

Digitized by Google

copper camp of Ely, birthplace of the greatest lowest-cost porphyry copper mine of America.

By invading the Ely territory as promoter and annexing Ely Central, the Scheftels corporation committed what was probably, to the interests among whom our publicity work had wrought greatest havoc, an unpardonable crime. We butted into the very heart of their game, and became a disturbing factor in their mining operations.

The Ely Central property consists of more than 490 acres. Years before, in the early days of the camp, it had been passed over by the geologists and promoters who selected the ground for the Nevada Consolidated, Giroux and Cumberland-Ely, because it was covered by a non-mineralized formation called rhyolite. As development work progressed and the enormous value of the surrounding mines was disclosed, it dawned on their owners that they might have made a mistake and that it would be just as well to obtain possession of the Ely Central property.

The ground was especially valuable to the Nevada Consolidated, if for no other reason, as mere acreage to connect up and make compact the properties owned by them. The second demonstration of their bad judgment was the fact that, having planned to mine the Copper Flat ore-body by the steam-shovel method, they overlooked the value of the Ely Central property as affording them the only practical means of access to the lower levels of that pit for operation by the steam shovels.

Investigation had disclosed to me that the evidence which had been adduced by mine developments on neighboring properties was all in favor of copper ore underlying the Ely Central area. The rhyolite, which covered Ely Central, was a "flow," covering the ore, and not a "dyke," coming up from below and cutting it off.

Why was the property idle? Inquiry revealed that the Ely Central Copper Company was $89,000 in debt, and that a pre-panic effort to finance the corporation for deep mine development had failed. The panic of 1907–8 had crimped the promoters and they could not go ahead.

The Scheftels corporation entered into negotiations with the Pheby brothers and O. A. Turner, who held the control, for all the stock of the Ely Central company that was owned by them. During the progress of negotiations, early in July, 1909, I heard that the Guggenheims and W. B. Thompson were very much put out to learn that the Scheftels company was about to finance the company. They had belittled the value of the property, as would-be buyers are prone to do the world over.

Before I entered upon the scene the Pheby brothers had found themselves objects of persistent and mysterious attacks. Their credit was assailed in every quarter and they found themselves ambushed and bushwhacked in every move they made. They were forced into a position where it was believed they would accept anything that might be offered them for their interest in Ely Central. As fate would have it, the Scheftels company entered the race at this psychological moment.

Summed up, the Scheftels company actually contracted for 1,280,571 shares out of 1,600,000, which represented the increased capitalization, for a total sum of $1,158,916, or at an average price of 90½ cents per share. The time allowed for the payment of all the money was nine months, stipulated payments being agreed upon at regular intervals in between. The immediate effect of the arrangement was this: A dormant property, in debt and lying fallow, was metamorphosed into a going concern with good prospects of soon becoming a proved great copper mine, with an assured income to defray the expenses of deep mine development on a large scale, and a market career ahead of it that might be expected to match any that had preceded it in the Ely district from the standpoint of public interest.

DURING the progress of the negotiations the stock sold up to $1 per share. The selling for Philadelphia account of a large block of stock in the open market dropped the price back, of a sudden, to 50 cents. The Scheftels company bought stock on this break and urged its customers to do likewise. On the day the deal was concluded the market had rallied to 75 cents. Fully six weeks before the deal was arranged the Scheftels Market Letter and the *Mining Financial News* had begun to urge the purchase of the stock. The Scheftels organization was not hoggish. The establishment was willing that the public should get in on the cellar floor. There were nearly 300,000 shares outstanding,

Digitized by Google

which the Scheftels corporation had not corralled in its contract.

Readers of the Market Letter and the *Mining Financial News* fell over one another to get in on the good thing. Therein they were wise. By early September the price had advanced in the market to $1. The Scheftels publicity was strong in favor of the stock. But it had not yet put on full steam. It was waiting for an engineer's report to make doubly sure it was right.

Col. Wm. A. Farish, a mining engineer of many years' experience and a man with a high reputation throughout the whole of the Western mining country, had been sent by the Scheftels company to make a report on the Ely Central. Years before Colonel Farish had reported on the Nevada Consolidated properties and outlined the very methods now being used for recovering its ores. But Colonel Farish had been ahead of his time, and the capitalists in whose interest he was acting were not prepared for such a radical step in advance of the then-existing methods, nor to believe that copper ores of such low grade could be mined at a profit, especially 140 miles from the nearest railroad. Times and conditions changed, and the 140 miles to the nearest railroad were spanned by a well-equipped rail connection.

Colonel Farish's opinion verified our fondest expectations. The report set forth that the mine possibilities of Ely Central were nearly as great as those of the Nevada Consolidated itself. On the basis of this report, which was made in September, the project acquired a new significance. Development operations were undertaken to prove up the ground in an endeavor to demonstrate the existence of the 33,000,000 tons of commercial porphyry ore which Colonel Farish indicated in his report would likely be found within the boundaries of the southern part of the Ely Central property.

The prospect fairly took the Scheftels organization off its feet. We were dazzled. We saw ourselves at the head of a mine worth $25,000,000 to $40,000,000. No time was lost in organizing a campaign to finance the whole deal. Having no syndicated multi-millionaires to back it up, the Scheftels corporation went to the public for the money, the same as hundreds of other notable and successful promoters had done. The ensuing publicity campaign to raise capital has been described in hundreds of columns of newspaper space as one of the most spectacular ever attempted in Wall Street.

I had absolute faith in the great merits of Ely Central, a faith that has not been dimmed in the slightest degree by the vicissitudes through which the company, the Scheftels corporation, and myself personally have passed. Within thirteen months the Scheftels corporation caused to be spent for mine development more than $150,000, and on mine and company administration an additional $75,000. When the Scheftels company was raided by the Government on September 29, 1910, and a stop put to further work the expenses at the mine had averaged for the nine months of that year above $15,000 a month. Work was going on night and day. Every possible effort was being made to prove-up the property in short order. Core-drills sent down from the surface had already revealed the presence of ore at depth, and I am sublimely certain that another month or two would have put the underground air-drills into contact with a vast ore-body identical in quality and value with that lying on either side in Nevada Consolidated acreage.

Ely Central was the New York Curb sensation in 1909–1910. I used the publicity forces which had been so successful in protecting the public against the rapacity of multi-millionaire mining-wolves to educate them up to the speculative possibilities of Ely Central.

Up went the price. Between the first of September and the middle of October the market advanced to $2 3-8. On October 13th advices reached us that 30 per cent. copper ore had been struck in the Monarch shaft. The Monarch is an independent working, far removed from the area that is sandwiched in between the main ore-bodies of the Nevada Consolidated. We were highly elated. The prospect looked exceedingly bright to us, and there was no longer any hesitation in strongly advising our following to take advantage of an unusually attractive speculative opening.

THE market boomed along in a most satisfactory way. By October 26th the price reached $3; on November 3d it was $4 a share, and three days thereafter $4¼ was paid.

The expenses of the Scheftels company on publicity work at this time amounted to about $1,000 a day. Money for mine de-

Digitized by Google

velopment on Ely Central was being spent as fast as it could be employed. We were trying to sell enough stock at a profit over the option price to defray the publicity expenses, keep the mine financed, and meet our payments on the option, but no more. We were not making any effort to liquidate on a large scale, a fact which was reflected in the advancing quotations.

When the price of Ely Central hit $4 in the market, the Scheftels company rated itself as worth from $3,000,000 to $4,000,000. I had visions of leading the Guggenheims and Lewisohns and Thompsons up the Great White Way with rings in their noses. Nat. C. Goodwin, who had a 25 per cent. interest in the Scheftels enterprise, enjoyed similar visions, only his fancy ran to building new theaters for all-star casts.

While Ely Central stock was going skyward and all the speculating world was making money in it, our publicity forces were busily driving the bald facts home regarding La Rose, Cumberland-Ely, Nevada-Utah and other pets of the mighty. Our batteries never let up for a moment. These various attacked interests were getting ready to strike back. If their movements had been directed by an individual general they could not have worked with more community of interest. One day the sky fell in on us. The plans had been beautifully laid for our complete ruin. That we escaped utter annihilation was almost a miracle.

On Wednesday, November 3d, the result of our market operations on the New York Curb was that we quit long on the day nearly 8,000 shares of Ely Central at an average price of $4. On the same day our customers ordered the purchase of nearly twice as much stock as they ordered sold. This indicated to us that the Curb selling was professional. There was nothing very remarkable about this performance because brokers doing business on the Curb very frequently play the market for a fall.

On Thursday, the day following, the Scheftels company was again compelled to purchase stock on the Curb in excess of sales to the extent of 7,600 shares, while on the same day the buy orders of house customers exceeded their orders to sell at least three to one. The professional selling was now accompanied by rumors on the Curb which spread like the smell of fire that trouble of some dire sort was pending for the Scheftels company. Most of this emanated from an embittered brokerage quarter and we paid little attention to it.

On the succeeding day, Friday, November 5th, the professional selling was quieted to a point that compelled the Scheftels company to go long of only 6,600 shares on the day in its Curb market operations. The purchase of so small a block of stock excited no suspicion in the Scheftels camp, although it should have, because Scheftels' customers on this day purchased more than four times as much stock as they ordered sold, pointing conclusively to a great public demand and much shorting by professionals.

Then came the *coup de main.*

THE ASSAULT ON ELY CENTRAL

THE 6th day of November fell on a Saturday. The New York *Sun* of that morning published under a scare head a vicious attack on the Ely Central promotion. The attack was based on an article which was credited in advance to the *Engineering & Mining Journal* and appeared in the *Sun* ahead of its publication in that weekly. The *Sun* had been furnished with advance proofs. The Ely Central project was stamped as a rank swindle. Everybody identified with it was raked over and I, particularly, was pictured as an unprincipled and dangerous character, entirely unworthy of confidence and at the moment engaged in plucking the public of hundreds of thousands. It was stated that the Ely Central property had been explored in the early days of the Ely camp and found of no value whatsoever from a mining standpoint. The Scheftels corporation was accused of setting out in a cold-blooded way to swindle investors on a bunco proposition.

I was in my apartment at the Hotel Marie Antoinette at 9 A. M. when I read the *Sun's* story. The Scheftels company had thrown $85,000 behind the market during the three preceding market days to hold it against the attack of professionals.

I called the Scheftels office on the 'phone and gave instructions that a certified check for $40,000 be sent to Wasserman Brothers, members of the New York Stock Exchange, with orders to purchase 10,000 shares of Ely Central at $4 1-8, which was the quotation at the close on the afternoon before.

Digitized by Google

Orders to buy 15,000 shares more at the same figure were distributed among other brokers. The single order was given to Wasserman Brothers because I thought it good strategy. They are a house of undoubted great responsibility and it seemed to me that their presence in the market on the buying side would have an excellent tonic effect.

During the two hours' session I held the 'phone, receiving five minute reports from the scene of action. Mr. Goodwin was at my side. At ten minutes to twelve the brokers had reported the purchase, on balance, of 24,225 shares. Had they purchased 675 shares more they would have completed the orders that were outstanding and it would have been up to me to decide whether to lend further support or not. By that time my figures showed that the Scheftels corporation had thrown behind the market $200,000 in four days to hold it and I was beginning to have "that funny feeling." During the last few minutes of the Saturday Curb session the selling ceased and it seemed that possibly my fears were unfounded.

On Sunday, the 7th, my hopes went a-glimmering. All the New York papers featured scathing articles, using as authority the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* attack, which had appeared on the previous afternoon. Dispatches indicated, too, that the papers of Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco had played it up on the front page as the most shocking mining-stock scandal of the century.

By Monday, the whole country had been plastered with the sensation. Of course my early Past, all of which was a family affair and had transpired fourteen years prior, long before I essayed to enter the mining promotion field, was dragged out of the skeleton-closet. It lent verisimilitude to the stories.

After reading the Sunday newspapers, I grasped the meaning of the move and marshalled our forces. It was plain that we had been marked for the sacrifice. It looked as though we hadn't a chance in a million of weathering the onslaught if we lent the market further support. There were about 500,000 shares of Ely Central in the public's hands, and, without close to $2,000,000 in ready cash to throw behind the market, we could not be certain of staying the tide. We didn't have anything like that sum. Personally I did not give up the fight, but the outlook was mighty blue.

All day Sunday trusted clerks of the Scheftels company worked on the books, making a statement of the "stop-loss" orders and "good-till-cancelled" orders of customers. On Monday morning the newspapers contained aftermath stories of the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* arraignment. The air was surcharged with the impending calamity.

THE CLASH OF BATTLE

WITH a line of defense carefully outlined, I approached the fray. First, the Scheftels corporation placed with reliable brokers written orders to sell at the opening the stocks that were specified in the stop-loss and good-till-cancelled orders of customers. Not an order to sell a share of inside stock was given. It was also decided not to place any supporting orders until after the market opened and it could be determined with some degree of accuracy what the volume of stock amounted to that was pressing for sale.

Just before the market opened I could see from my office window a dense crowd of brokers assembled around the Ely Central specialists. Although ominously silent, they were struggling for position and were tensely nervous. It was plain that the over-Sunday anti-Scheftels newspaper publicity had racked Ely Central stockholders and created a panicky movement to liquidate, which was about to find vent in violent explosion. It was evident that the Scheftels corporation would have to conserve every resource if the day was to be saved.

The market opened. Instantly there was terrific action. Hundreds of hands were waving wildly in the air. Everybody wanted to sell and nobody wanted to buy. The chorus was deafening. Screams rent the air. The tumult was heard blocks away. Every newspaper had a man on the spot. Brokers from the New York Stock Exchange left their posts and came to see the big show; the Stock Exchange was half emptied. The spectacle had been advertised widely and everybody was keenly awake and wrought up to a high pitch of excitement over what had been scheduled to occur.

Had the Scheftels brokers been supplied with orders to buy one-quarter of a million

Digitized by Google

shares of stock at the closing market price of the Saturday before, $4 1-8, it was very apparent that they would have been unable to hold the market. The opening sale was at $4. Downward to the $3 point the stock traveled, breaking from 25 to 50 cents between sales. Through $3 and on down to the $2 point the price crashed. Blocks of 10,000 shares were madly thrown into the vortex of trading. The Curb was a struggling, screaming, maddened throng of brokers. Every trader appeared to be determined to crush the market structure. At $2 a share there was a temporary check in the decline, but the bears renewed their onslaught, gaining confidence by the outpour of selling orders. Within less than an hour after the opening the stock hit $1 1-2 a share. At this juncture the Scheftels broker in Ely Central reported that he had executed all the stop-loss and good-till-cancelled orders entrusted to him with the exception of 19,000 shares.

"The Scheftels company will take the lot at $1 1-2," I said.

In lending succor at $1 1-2 per share I was really stretching a point, although at this figure the net market shrinkage of the Ely Central capitalization was in excess of $3,000,000. This melting of market value was awful to contemplate. On the other hand the newspaper agitation was unmitigated in its violence, stockholders were convulsed, a break of serious proportions was certain, and it was up to me to conserve every dollar. The moment the Scheftels bid of $1.50 a share made its appearance on the Curb and the selling from the same source for the account of customers was discontinued, it was seen that the force of the drive had spent itself, at least for the time being. Support now came from the "shorts." They started to cash their profits on their short sales of the days previous. Crazed selling was transformed to frantic buying.

The scene at this juncture was dramatic. It was the momentary culmination of a cumulative, convulsive cataclysm. In refraining from selling for its own account the Scheftels corporation violated one of the sacred rules and privileges not only of the New York Curb but of the New York Stock Exchange. In both of these markets it is the custom, where brokers have advance information of an impending calamity, to beat the public to the market and get out their own lines first, leaving customers to take care of themselves.

By deftly feeding stock to bargain hunters and to the "shorts" at intervals and buying stock when it pressed for sale from frightened holders at other periods the Scheftels company was able to support the market that afternoon to a close with sales recorded at $2 a share. The cash loss of the Scheftels company on its Curb transactions in Ely Central that day was $60,000. This fresh sacrifice was needed to steady the market.

Tuesday, the following day, the daily newspapers belched forth further tirades of abuse and calumny. The market crash in Ely Central was held up to the public as proof positive that the project was a daring swindle. The raid on the stock in the market was renewed. A Johnstown flood of liquidation ensued. Fluctuations were violent. Opening at $2, the price was forced down to $1. It afterward rebounded to $2, but the waters would not subside, the stock was hammered again and it closed at $1 per share. To meet the oncoming emergencies the Scheftels corporation was obliged to fortify its cash reserve in the only one way that offered. It was compelled to convert a large part of its reserves of securities into cash and it had to sell on a declining market. Many accounts were withdrawn by timid customers, and the Scheftels company was further called upon to give stability to Rawhide Coalition and Bovard Consolidated, other stocks which it had been sponsoring in the markets. Loans were called by brokers with whom the Scheftels company was carrying stocks, deliveries were frantically tendered to the Scheftels company of stocks it had purchased at previous high levels, and a financial onslaught made generally that would undoubtedly have sunk the Scheftels' ship but for the fact that we had backed-up in the nick of time, had measured our distance, had gone just so far and not too far, and had kept on the firing-line.

An exceedingly gratifying feature of the sensational day was the way in which our friends stood by us. The venom and selfishness of the overwhelming assaults that had been made upon us convinced many of the public that we were being made the victims of a special attack, and with the natural impulse that governs honorable men they gave testimony to their confidence in us.

Digitized by Google

ON WEDNESDAY the campaign terminated. Ely Central weakened an eighth from the $1 point, the closing of the day before, recovered to sales at $1¾ and closed at $1½ bid; $1 5-8 asked.

All day long our offices were thronged with newspaper reporters and with pale-faced and agitated customers. Our clients felt their helplessness in such a tumult of warring forces. The only thing they could do was to stand by and watch developments as the battle waged. It was a proud moment for me when, at the end of the day's market, I mounted the platform in the Scheftels customers' trading-room, gave voice to a shrill cheer of triumph and wrote on the blackboard the following:

"We have not closed out a single margin account! We are carrying everybody!"

The scene which followed warmed the cockles of my heart. I was literally mobbed, but it was a friendly mob. We all joined in a season of noisy rejoicing. That we should have been able to survive the three-days' siege with minimum losses to customers and without sacrificing a single margin account was a signal achievement. I doubt if there are many cases like it in the history of Wall Street.

Scores of telegrams were received from out-of-town customers to whom the margin respite was wired. One of these read:

You may look for a tidal wave of business. Your princely action warrants 21 guns for the House of Scheftels.

Another one was to this effect:

The whole situation was greased for your descent. It was a shoot-the-chutes and a bump-the-bumps proposition. Congratulations on your survival.

Hundreds of letters of a similar tenor poured in upon us. Many of these came from the camp of Ely itself, where large blocks of the stock were held by mining men on the ground.

Thursday the stock closed at $1¾; Friday it advanced to sales at $1 7-8 and hung there.

The Scheftels organization now drew its first long breath. Friends and enemies alike marveled how the corporation had managed to survive. We had held the fort, but at murderous cost.

I got busy with the publicity forces at my command. Through the Scheftels Market Letter and the *Mining Financial News* the story was told of the whole dastardly campaign.

The Weekly Market Letter of the Scheftels company on November 13, 1909, devoted 24 columns to the story of the raid.

That the Guggenheim-managed Nevada Consolidated was well pleased with the publication of the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* attack seemed clear to me. The reason was this: In its attack the *Engineering & Mining Journal* stated that two drill-holes put down by the Nevada Consolidated in the immediate vicinity of Ely Central had failed to show better than nine-tenths of one per cent. copper ore which, the article said, was below commercial grade. (At this late date, October, 1911, they are mining ore in the steam-shovel pit of the Nevada Consolidated that will not average more than eight-tenths of one per cent. copper, transporting it to the concentrator, more than twenty miles away, and treating it at a profit. But this is not the point.) An engineer of international prominence telegraphed the Scheftels company from Ely as follows:

Two drill holes mentioned in *Engineering & Mining Journal* article were completed only last week. Results must have been telegraphed to New York.

These holes gave great trouble on account of caving ground. I heard drill runners say they were stopped on that account and were in ore in bottom. In any case, it is not conclusive of unpayable ore in vicinity. This condition often occurs.

I COULD write a book in reply to the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* tirade, showing the utter flimsiness of the statements it made. Limited space forbids anything more than an outline.

Charles S. Herzig was employed to report confidentially on the property. Mr. Herzig's report was later checked up by Dr. Walter Harvey Weed, a great copper geologist of known high standing who was formerly one of the principal experts of the United States Geological Survey and was himself a frequent contributor to the *Engineering & Mining Journal.* Dr. Walter Harvey Weed wired to the C. L. Constant Company, the metallurgists and mining engineers, from Ely, as follows:

After making a most thorough examination my opinion is Southern part Ely Central property is covered by rhyolite capping. Geological evidence demonstrates that the porphyry extends eastward

Digitized by Google

(through Ely Central) from steam-shovel pit and with excellent chance of containing commercial ore beneath a leached zone. A well defined strong Fault separates steam-shovel ore from rhyolite area and this Fault Plane may carry copper glance (very rich copper ore) of recent origin, due to descending solutions. The iron-stained jasperoid croppings in the limestone areas give promise of making ore in depth on Ely Central property as they do in Giroux.

The *Engineering & Mining Journal* said in its article that the northern portion of Ely Central showed the Arcturus limestone of the district. It stated that in this limestone at various places there is a little mineralization but never during the history of the district were any profitable results obtained. As against this, Engineers Farish, Herzig and Weed reported that the limestone areas on Ely Central would likely show the presence of mines. As a matter of fact, Giroux, neighbor of Ely Central, had sunk through this limestone and opened one of the richest bodies of copper ore ever disclosed.

The *Engineering & Mining Journal* said that in representing that pay ore is likely to exist in the area of Ely Central sandwiched in between the two big mines of Nevada Consolidated, the Scheftels company was practising deception. Not only did Messrs. Farish, Herzig and Weed report in favor of the likelihood, but it is now a commonly accepted fact that, unless all known geological indications are deceptive, Ely Central has the ore in this stretch of territory. A report made as late as September, 1911, by engineer Richard T. Pierce, for the reorganization committee of Ely Central, expresses the opinion that an area 1,300 feet by 1,900 feet at the southeast end of the Eureka workings "will be found to contain mineralized porphyry, with reasonable assurance that commercial ore will be had in it."

Mr. Herzig's first telegram from Ely after examining the Ely Central property was to this effect:

There is no question that the rhyolite was deposited in Ely Central after the enrichment of the porphyry. The Fault that limits the rhyolite in the Nevada Consolidated pit is indicated by several feet thickness of crushed mineralized porphyry-rhyolite ore, which is a positive evidence that the porphyry was enriched before the faulting. The limestone and contact areas owned by the company, in my opinion, have great potential value. The indications are in every way similar to Bisbee. Rich carbonate ore has been encountered on the Clipper and Monarch claims of Ely Central and I look forward to seeing big ore bodies opened up at these places.

Reports of both these engineers, many thousand words in length, made later, confirm these messages.

WHAT probably convinced me more than anything else of the inaccuracy of the statements regarding the Ely Central property by the *Engineering & Mining Journal* was the attitude of Charles S. Herzig. He is my brother.

Up to within thirty days of the appearance of the attack in the *Engineering & Mining Journal* I had not set eyes on him in fifteen years. A graduate of the Columbia School of Mines, he had in the interim examined mining properties in South Africa, Egypt, Australia, the East Indies, Siberia, every European country, Canada, Mexico, Central America, South America and the United States in the interests of some of the world's greatest financiers. These expert examinations had covered deposits of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, coal and other minerals. In the engineering profession he is known as an expert who has his first failure yet to record. His standing is unquestioned as an engineer and a mine-valuer.

I had heard some criticism of the Farish report, made by engineers of the modern school, in which it was pointed out that Colonel Farish had failed to give scientific reasons for all of his deductions. I asked Captain W. Murdoch Wiley, then a member of the C. L. Constant Company, assayers, metallurgists and mining engineers, whether he could induce my brother to make an examination. I did not approach Charles myself, because we had been estranged. So it was that when he returned from Europe after an absence of many years, he had not even looked me up. Captain Wiley arranged for a meeting at the Engineers' Club. I went there, and was formally introduced by Captain Wiley to my brother across a table.

"What will you take to make a report on Ely Central?" I asked in the same matter-of-fact way I would have addressed a stranger.

"What's the purpose of the report?"

"The Scheftels company wants confidential, expert information such as you are qualified to give as to the value and prospects of the property," I answered.

"I'll take $5,000," he said, "but only on

Digitized by Google

one condition. I am going to the Ely and Ray districts to report for English capitalists, and I can take your property in at the same time. My report is not to be published and I reserve the right to make a verbal instead of a written one. If you really want to know what I think of the property, I am quite willing to give it a careful examination and let you know. Because of the stock-market campaign you are making, I would not accept your offer if, did I report favorably, your idea would be to make use of the report in the market."

The bargain was struck. A few days later Mr. Herzig received $2,500 from the Scheftels company, on account, and a check for traveling expenses. He left for Ely.

On the Saturday morning when the New York *Sun* article appeared containing the excerpts from the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* onslaught, I wired my brother substantially as follows:

Savage attack in *Engineering & Mining Journal* on Ely Central. If your report on property is favorable, I beg you to let us have it by wire and allow the use of it to counteract.

An hour later I followed it up with another message telling him not to wire any report. I set forth that because he was my brother, it might prove of little avail, now that the publication had been made, and that it might only tend to do him personal damage in the profession because of the unqualified manner in which the *Engineering & Mining Journal* had taken a stand against the property. In reply he wired Captain W. Murdoch Wiley the short but decisive report already quoted herein, regarding the geological reasons why Ely Central should have the ore, which afterward was fully verified by Dr. Walter Harvey Weed in the message also reproduced in the foregoing. In a letter from Ely to Captain Wiley confirming the message, the original of which is in my possession, Mr. Herzig said:

I have formed a very favorable opinion of the property. I feel that it has the making of a big mine, and under the circumstances I am willing to stand a little racket for a time.

The same day he wired Captain Wiley to buy for his account 2,500 shares of Ely Central at the market price, which order was executed through the Scheftels company.

Editor Ingalls of the *Engineering & Mining Journal* and my brother had been friends for years. My brother had been employed early in his career by the Lewisohns, Guggenheims and the Anaconda Copper Company, and later in Europe, Australia and India by mine operators of even higher class. Up to the time when the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* attack appeared he had not committed himself on Ely Central. When he did commit himself it was with the foreknowledge that in doing the unselfish and courageous thing his name would be besmirched if under development Ely Central turned out to be what the *Engineering & Mining Journal* had declared probable. In that event his relationship with me would be held up as positive proof of duplicity and it would look bad for him. The fact that under all these circumstances he jumped into the breach satisfied me that the attack of the *Engineering & Mining Journal* was unjustified.

A BOMBSHELL IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

AS SOON as the Scheftels corporation was able to obtain a copy of the corroborative report of Dr. Walter Harvey Weed, which the great copper geologist made to the C. L. Constant Company, it filed a libel suit against the *Engineering & Mining Journal* for $750,000 damages. Simultaneously Mr. Scheftels filed another suit for an additional $100,000 in his own behalf.

The filing of the Scheftels libel suits against the *Engineering & Mining Journal* was a bombshell. It was formal notice to the forces arrayed against us that we did not propose to be made victims of an unholy hostility and that we were determined to proceed along old lines and not abate in the slightest our wide-open publicity measures. It was also noticed that we proposed to go through with the Ely Central deal.

After it became evident that we intended to keep on fighting, the Scheftels offices were openly visited and inspected in detail one day by the late Police Inspector McCafferty. In a bullying manner this police official let it be known that we were in official disfavor with him. His manner could hardly have been more offensive if he had been invading a den of counterfeiters. Mr. McCafferty did not specify just what he was after or just what he expected to find, but he made it plain to us that we were marked and that he had it in for us.

Digitized by Google

He stalked scowlingly through the entire establishment and made vague threats of what was in store for us.

Late that night I learned that the Inspector had invaded the livingrooms of my associate, Nat. C. Goodwin, where he delivered himself somewhat as follows:

"What are you fellows trying to do, anyway? What are you trying to put across on us? Do you think we are going to stand for any such newspaper notoriety as you are getting and watch it with our arms folded? Do you think we are fools or crazy, or what? I want you to understand that you fellows have got your nerve with you. Get busy or the police will be on your backs tomorrow!"

I told Mr. Goodwin that our enemies had evidently sicked the Inspector on to us, but that I didn't think any action would be taken. We were victims and not culprits, and unless, indeed, the United States was Russia, nothing untoward could happen.

I promised Mr. Goodwin, however, that I would attend to the matter without delay. I laid all of the facts regarding the newspaper attack before a prominent citizen who promised forthwith to convey the information in person to the Inspector or one of his superiors. He did so. That was the last we heard of the matter.

The *Engineering & Mining Journal's* lawyers addressed themselves to customers of the Scheftels company, who had lost money in the market break in Ely Central from $4 to $1.50. By letter they urged them to send on a full statement of facts and suggested that they might be of service, and without charge.

Letters of this character were sent to large numbers of our customers, many of whom simply sent them to us. In some cases, however, customers who had read the attack in the *Engineering & Mining Journal* or quotations from it in the widely circulated daily newspapers, needed but the letter from the lawyers to induce them to come forward with a complaint.

On the whole, this fishing expedition must have been something of a water-haul and a disappointment, for the attorneys of the *Engineering & Mining Journal.*

The Post-office Department at New York, in January and February, sent letters broadcast to readers of the Scheftels Weekly Market Letter, asking whether the business carried on was satisfactory—the usual form that is used where a firm is under investigation. Scores of these letters were forwarded to us by customers with remarks to the effect that evidently "somebody was after us." An inquiry of this sort is calculated to do terrible damage to the reputation and standing of any house that does a quasi-banking business. Our attorneys complained to Inspector Mayer of the New York division of the Post-office that an injustice was being done. No more letters of the character described were sent out, because the early replies that were received by the Inspector to his circular letter brought forth no serious complaints. However, it was afterward disclosed that the investigation did not cease here and that the Post-Office Department continued to conduct a searching inquiry only finally to abandon its enterprise.

Enters upon the scene an associate of the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* lawyers defending that publication against our suit for libel. He called at the Scheftels offices and demanded from Mr. Scheftels information with regard to the account of C. H. Slack of Chicago. He got it. It showed that Mr. Slack had purchased 50,000 shares of Bovard Consolidated at 10 cents per share, for which he had paid cash, and that Mr. Slack had purchased an additional 100,000 shares at 14¼ and 14¾ cents per share; and that Mr. Slack had refused, after the market declined to below the purchase price, to pay the balance due, because of delayed delivery.

The delay in delivery was accidental. The Scheftels company actually had in its possession two million shares of the stock or more, and the delivery would have been tendered earlier but for the fact that the raid on Ely Central had piled up so much work for the clerical force that everything was set back. We knew of no legitimate excuse for Mr. Slack, because he could have ordered the stock sold at any time, delivery or no delivery. The Slack transaction receives amplification here, because later, when the Scheftels corporation was raided by a Special Agent of the Department of Justice, it figured as one of the cases cited by the Agent in the warrant sworn to by him against B. H. Scheftels & Company as proving the commission of crime.

Another case about which Mr. Scheftels was asked to give full information was that

Digitized by Google

of D. J. Szymanski, a corn doctor at 25 Broad Street. Mr. Scheftels had urged the Doctor to buy Ely Central when it was selling at 75 cents before the rise. Later, when the advance was well under way, above the $3 point, the Doctor bought some stock through the Scheftels corporation. When the price hit $4 he was urged to take profits. He refused to do so. When the attack began and the price broke badly the Doctor saw a big loss ahead.

He called at the Scheftels' office and begged for the return of the money he had lost in his Ely Central speculation.

The investigation was heralded among the brokers and caused much market pressure on the stocks fathered by the Scheftels company. We were not dismayed. To strengthen our position and to give added token of our good faith we increased our development operations at the mines. Our expenses in that quarter were swelled to the limit of working capacity on our underground explorations, as I realized that our salvation might depend on making good in quick order with Ely Central from a mining standpoint. We knew the ore was there and that it was up to us to get it before our enemies got us.

A GOVERNMENT RAID IS RUMORED

OUT of a blue sky late in the month of June came news to the Scheftels office that a newspaper reporter on the New York *American* had stated that he had seen a memorandum in the city editor's assignment-book to watch out for a Scheftels raid by the United States Government. The information was reliable and it gave us a shock. Yet the thought that the powers of a great government like the United States could be used to crush us without giving us a hearing seemed unbelievable.

To be on the safe side Mr. Scheftels, accompanied by an attorney of high standing, visited Washington. They went direct to the Department of Justice, where Attorney-General Wickersham's private secretary, after a friendly conversation, referred them to the chief clerk. He reported, after a search of twenty-five minutes' duration, that there was no charge against B. H. Scheftels & Company. He even volunteered the information that he did not know that such a firm was in existence.

It afterward developed that at the very time Mr. Scheftels and the attorney were at the Department of Justice a special rubber-shoe investigation was on under the dual direction of a young Washington lawyer on Attorney-General Wickersham's personal staff, and a Special Agent of the Department of Justice. The latter had been given extraordinary powers as a special agent of the Department of Justice, ostensibly to "clean out Wall Street."

Satisfied they were in the wrong place, Mr. Scheftels and the counsellor departed from the Attorney-General's office for the Post-Office Department. They were referred to Chief Inspector Sharp. The lawyer requested that the Scheftels corporation be given a hearing before any action was taken on any complaints that might reach the department. Mr. Sharp agreed to this on condition that the attorney would agree for the Scheftels company that an inspection of the books of the corporation would be permitted on demand at any time. There was a ready assent. A memorandum to this effect was left with Inspector Sharp.

Mr. Scheftels left the Department with positive assurance that no snap judgment would be taken. Edmund R. Dodge of Nevada, personal counsel of B. H. Scheftels & Company, then addressed a letter to U. S. Senator Newlands with the request that he take the matter up direct with the Postmaster-General.

Senator Newlands, under date of July 2, wrote Mr. Dodge that he had addressed a letter to the Postmaster-General with the request that notice be given to Mr. Dodge in case any complaint or information was lodged against the Scheftels corporation. A few days later Senator Newlands sent Mr. Dodge a letter from Theodore Ingalls, Acting Chief Inspector of the Post-Office Department, in which Mr. Ingalls said it was the practise of the Department in case of alleged use of the mails for fraudulent purposes to give individuals against whom complaint has been made full opportunity to be heard either through person or counsel, should adverse action be contemplated as a result of the investigation of such allegation.

Feeling that our house had been securely safeguarded against surprise parties, I at this juncture took a trip to Nevada, where urgent business matters required my attention. While I was in the West telegrams were sent me that the premier mail-order

Digitized by Google

mining-stock bucket-shop firm on Broad Street was flooding the mail and burdening the telegraph wires with urgent appeals to stockholders of Rawhide Coalition, one of our specialties, to sell out their holdings, as a severe break in the price of the shares was impending. Forewarned of this attack, I telegraphed instructions from Reno to meet the onslaught with a notice in the *Mining Financial News* addressed to investors, telling them to be on their guard.

My trip to the West made a pocketful of money for investors by my purchase of the control in the Jumbo Extension company on a monthly payment plan. The price of the stock tripled in the market. My reentrance into the Goldfield camp was especially distasteful to the Nixon-Wingfield interests. Before I left Goldfield I was actually warned that the vengeance wreaked on the Sullivan Trust Company would be visited on the Scheftels company for daring to reinvade the Goldfield district.

LATE in August the Scheftels company endured what was probably the most severe strain it had been put to since its incorporation. We had been making heroic efforts to rally the price of our specialties on the New York Curb market. We were meeting with unusual resistance from professional sources. At the period of which I narrate, Ely Central had registered a low quotation of 62½ cents and we had successfully strengthened it to around $1. All the way up we met with heavy sales. One day deliveries crowded in so fast that three cashiers working in the "cage" were unable to keep up with the transactions. The business of the corporation had been heavy in the general list as well as in the house specialties. There was more than sufficient money on hand to finance all the transactions that day, but not, however, unless deposits were made in bank as rapidly as our own deliveries were made and collected for by our messengers.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon a report reached the Curb that the bank checks of B. H. Scheftels & Company were not being promptly certified. As this rumor gained currency the excitement on the Curb increased. The Curb concluded that we were at last "busted." Motley throngs began to assemble in front of the offices. The fierce yells of brokers could be heard bidding for and offering Scheftels checks below their face value. A throng of the riffraff of the Street swarmed in front of the building.

One or two individuals, implacable enemies who had repeatedly led the market onslaught against the Scheftels stocks, offered Scheftels checks for small sums at as low as 50 cents on the dollar. These were licked up by our friends who had been assured that we were financially all right and that some mistake must have been made at the bank.

Investigation showed that dilatory messenger service was responsible for the bank's delay in certifying. Our deposits did not reach the bank as promptly as they should have. As a special favor to us that afternoon, while the tumult in front of our doors was greatest, the bank continued to certify checks until 3:30 o'clock, extending the closing time 30 minutes. Then they reported that a comfortable cash balance was still on hand.

The next morning the newspapers started a jamboree. First-page, last-column, double-leaded, scare-head stories greeted every New Yorker for breakfast, telling him about the panic among Curb brokers to sell the Scheftels checks the afternoon before. Needless to say it was the kind of notoriety that was likely to do greatest injury to the House of Scheftels. If anything half as bad had been printed about the strongest bank in New York, that bank would have been forced to close its doors before the day was half over.

Nor did I for a moment underrate the danger of our position. Between two suns I managed to assemble $50,000 in addition to our cash reserves, with promises of as much more as was needed. We easily held the fort. At the end of the day's business I created a diversion by appearing in the Scheftels board-room, flourishing a handful of $1,000 bills before the newspaper men. The scribes found the Scheftels corporation meeting all demands, and, at the end of the session, with a small bale of undeposited money in its possession.

The strain, however, was great. Confidence was again impaired. Many accounts were withdrawn by customers. We were compelled to ease our load by selling accumulated stocks at a loss. The price of Ely Central and other Scheftels promotions dropped. The decline was assisted by general weakness in other Curb stocks.

Peculiarly enough, at the time when the market for Ely Central shares was lowest,

Digitized by Google

during the latter part of September, fourteen months after the Scheftels company had taken hold of the proposition, mine reports were most favorable. Underground development work and churn drilling had set at rest for all time the question of whether or not mineralized porphyry underlies the rhyolite cap or flow extending eastward through Ely Central ground from the steam-shovel pit of the Nevada Consolidated. Upward of $240,000 had been paid out for administration, mine equipment and for miners' wages to make this demonstration.

The Scheftels company was now informed that the Nevada Consolidated was actually meditating a trespass on the Juniper claim of the Ely Central company, in order to secure an outlet from the lower levels of its giant steam-shovel pit. Warning in writing had already been served on the Nevada Consolidated officials against such a course. On September 25th attorneys of the Ely Central Copper Company secured from a Nevada court an order restraining the Nevada Consolidated from proceeding with this trespass and citing it to show cause why it should not cease to trespass on other Ely Central ground.

The attorney telegraphed to New York that a bond was required before the injunction could be made operative. On September 27th and 28th telegrams were exchanged between the Ely Central offices in New York and the Nevada attorneys of the company at Reno as to providing sureties for the bond.

The sureties never qualified. A catastrophe befell us and brought to an earthquake finish the house of B. H. Scheftels & Company and all its ambitious plans.

THE constant turmoil in which the House of Scheftels had found itself, from the day the *Engineering & Mining Journal's* attack appeared, had made it impossible for the Scheftels company to hold the markets for Ely Central and Rawhide Coalition. Impairment of credit, money stringency and a general declining market were partly responsible. But there was another important factor. Because of the time-limit of its options, the Scheftels company was forced, from time to time, to throw stock on the market at prices which showed an actual loss.

It had one market winner which showed customers and the corporation itself a large profit, namely, Jumbo Extension. I held an option on approximately 450,000 shares of this stock at an average price of 35 cents, which I had turned over to the corporation. The market advanced to 70. Following the tactics employed in Ely Central at the outset of that deal, the Scheftels corporation had urged all its customers to buy Jumbo Extension at the very moment when I was negotiating for the option in Goldfield, with the result that purchases were made in the open market by readers of our market literature at from 25 cents up, with accompanying profit-making.

As the price soared, a short interest of 150,000 shares of Jumbo Extension had developed among brokers in San Francisco and New York, and it was very apparent from the demands of stock for borrowing purposes that it would be impossible for the short interests to cover excepting upon our terms. The Scheftels company was making ready for a "squeeze" of the shorts such as had not been administered before in the history of the Curb. At the very moment of victory, however, when we were making ready to execute a magnificent market coup in Jumbo Extension in the markets of San Francisco and New York, we were plunged without warning to complete ruin.

THE RAID ON B. H. SCHEFTELS & CO.

THE destruction of the Scheftels structure was consummated on the 29th day of September, 1910. I was standing on the front stoop of the Scheftels offices, watching the markets for the Scheftels specialties. A broker with San Francisco connections made me a bid of 68 cents for 10,000 shares of Jumbo Extension. I promptly refused. At that very moment my attention was called to the violent slamming of a door behind me. Turning to a Scheftels employe who was standing by my side, I learned that a number of strangers had filed into the customers' room without attracting any particular attention. I tried to get in. The door was locked. Undoubtedly something serious was transpiring. I walked a full block through the hallway to the New Street entrance of the building where the offices of the *Mining Financial News* adjoined those of the Scheftels corporation. I tried the door there with similar result. It was locked against me.

Digitized by Google

That settled it. I concluded that the ax had fallen.

The shock of realization that our offices were being raided by the Government did not for a moment throw me off my balance or put fear in my heart, nor did the sense of the outrage affect me at the moment. There was but one sickening thought—the ruin of the edifice I and my associates had labored day and night for so many months to build and the fate of our customers who had invested their money in the companies we had promoted.

In three seconds I was on my way to the place where I thought succor could be found—the offices of the Scheftels attorneys. I walked across the street to the New Street entrance of a building that extends from Broadway to New Street, ambled across to the Broadway side, jumped on a surface car, rode three blocks to Broadway and Cedar Street, jumped into an elevator, and in a few moments entered the offices of House, Grossman & Vorhaus.

"Go over to the Scheftels offices," I said, "and be quick! I think we are being raided."

In a moment two members of the law firm were on their way. Within ten minutes after the raiders had entered the offices the lawyers were on the spot. They were denied admittance and had to content themselves with waiting outside the door until the prisoners were taken out.

The moment the lawyers left their offices I began to use the 'phones to provide for the release on bail of the men arrested. I found it necessary to go in person and so I left the lawyers' offices and walked down Broadway. My attention was attracted by the clanging of the bell of the police-patrol wagon. As it wheeled past me on the run I could see my associates huddled together in the Black Maria on their way to the bastile.

For the moment, I lost full sense of the gravity of what was transpiring and was overcome by a feeling of joy that I had been spared that ignominy. That self-felicitating slant of an intensely serious situation passed. My associates were in trouble and it was up to me to help them. I was at large and I knew that I could do more for my friends and myself by not immediately surrendering.

I returned to the lawyers' offices, where I remained. All this time the thought never entered my mind that we were in any sense guilty of any intent to defraud anybody, or that we had committed any offense against law or the rules of fair conduct. The one consuming and controlling idea in my mind was that somebody had put one over on us and that it was up to me to organize for defense against the abominable outrage.

What transpired behind the closed doors while the Scheftels lawyers were attempting to gain an entrance for the instruction of the corporation, its officers and employees as to their rights, beggars description. Gentle reader, you would not conceive the reality to be possible. Armed with a warrant which conferred upon him the right to arrest, seize, search and confiscate, the Special Agent of the Department of Justice had secured from the local police headquarters a detail of fifteen heavily armed plain-clothes men.

Once inside the Scheftels establishment, the doors were locked and egress barred. The main body of invaders then took possession of the front offices, while others searched through the back rooms and boisterously commanded everybody to remain where they were until given permission to depart. The establishment was under seizure, every foot of it, and every person found within its doors was held prisoner. The Special Agent took pains to impress upon everybody within hearing that he was in supreme command. Leaving police guards in the front room, he stalked into the telegraph-cage where two or three operators were sitting at tables.

Pressing the muzzle of a revolver into the face of Chief Operator Walter Campbell—a quiet and inoffensive man—the Special Agent commanded:

"Cut off that connection!"

Mr. Campbell didn't at first see the gun because it was pointed at his blind eye. When he got his first peep he concluded that a maniac had invaded his sanctum and he almost expired with apoplexy on the spot.

RETURNING to the front office, the Agent entered the cashier's cage and took possession of the company's pouch containing its securities.

He gave no receipt to any responsible employe of the Scheftels Company for anything. When Mr. Stone, one of the cashiers, suggested to him that he was there to safeguard the securities, he thundered,

"Come out of there!"

"What authority have you for this?"

Digitized by Google

demanded Mr. Stone. The Agent thereupon showed his badge.

A moment later one of the deputies pried open the cash-drawer. The Special Agent was at his elbow.

"Oh, look what's here!" cried the deputy.

Thereupon the Agent of the Department of Justice impounded the contents of the cash-drawer, without counting the cash, checks, money-orders, etc., or giving any member of our firm a receipt for them.

Turning to the Scheftels officers and employees who had been placed under arrest, he ordered them removed from the room.

It was about as raw a performance as was ever witnessed in a peaceful brokerage firm's banking-room.

Bookkeepers were ordered to close up books. United States mail in the office was impounded, including mail that had been received in the office for delivery to others. The Scheftels employees were commanded to stand in their places with arms folded. The desperadoes among them—those for whom a warrant had been issued and who had been jerked out and huddled together in the outer room—were then searched for deadly weapons. One penknife and the stub of a lead-pencil were found on their persons. The deadly knife was hardly sharp enough to serve the purpose of nail-manicuring. Not one of the men under arrest would have known how to use a revolver if it had been placed in his hands.

The men taken into custody were: Mr. Scheftels, aged 54, quiet and inoffensive, rounding out an honorable business career without a blemish of any kind on his character or standing; Charles F. Belser, one of the cashiers of the corporation and a 32d degree Mason, who never before in his life had been so much as charged with the violation of the spirit of a minor ordinance; Charles B. Stone, aged 60, another cashier whose sons and sons-in-law had served their country in the army and who, himself, was as peaceful as a class leader in a Sunday-school; John Delaney, Clarence McCormick, William T. Seagraves and George Sullivan, clerks of the establishment, who were as likely to offer resistance that would require gun-play to combat as were a quartette of psalm-singing children.

Mr. Scheftels protested in a dignified and self-respecting way against the brutal demonstration. He asked to see the authority for the raid. This was refused until after he and the other desperate characters were collected in another room. His demand to see the officers' warrant was met by a vulgar exclamation from the Special Agent to the effect that, "If you don't shut up, we will put the irons on you! If you are looking for any trouble, you —— —— stiff, you will get what you are looking for!"

The absurdity of the armed invasion appealed to everybody but the ringleader of the raiders. It was a ludicrous situation from a service viewpoint. There had been no time up to the moment of the raid when a single man armed with proper authority could not have accomplished with decency and in good order everything and more than was done by the "rough house" and brutal invasion of the armed band.

Private papers were grabbed and bundles of certificates of stock, packages of money, checks, receipts and everything that came in sight were carried away. No complete record was made at the time of the raid of the documents and other valuables seized. The temporary receiver for B. H. Scheftels & Company, before his discharge later on, was able to gather together and take an accounting of part of the seized assets of the corporation, but I have no doubt that many thousands of dollars worth of securities and money were hopelessly lost.

When the wreck was completed the prisoners were driven like malefactors out of the front entrance, down the steps and loaded into the Black Maria. Five thousand people witnessed the act. The prisoners pleaded in vain to be allowed to pay for taxicabs to convey them before the United States Commissioner. They urged that as yet they had had no hearing and were innocent in the eyes of the law, and until convicted of some offense they were entitled to decent treatment. This request was refused. The delay in the start to the Federal building was just long enough to give the dense crowd that had filled the block time to insult the victims of the atrocity to the fullest extent. Friends of the arrested men boiled over with indignation and several fights occurred. Men were knocked down, trampled upon and the clothing torn from their backs in the desperate mêlée. The scene was disgraceful.

An army of newspaper reporters, attended by a camera brigade, were on the spot and snapshotted the prisoners as they entered the Black Maria. With bells

Digitized by Google

clanging and whips lashing, a start was made up Broad Street to Wall. Then the vehicle turned up Broadway and ding-donged on to the Federal building. There the men were arraigned. Bail aggregating $55,000 was demanded. Later several of the men taken into custody in this brutal manner were not even indicted.

Called upon to identify the prisoners, Special Agent of the Department of Justice was unable to point out any of them except Mr. Scheftels. A stenographer in the employ of the corporation was forced to single them out.

The warrant proved to have been sworn to by the Special Agent and had been granted on his affidavit that the corporation had committed crimes against some few of its customers. Two of them have already been mentioned in this article as Slack and Szymanski, whose statements had been furnished to the attorneys of the *Engineering & Mining Journal.*

From the Court House to the Tombs, the Scheftels desperadoes, in shackles, were escorted up Broadway. Later in the day when bail was ready and the prisoners were sent for, they were handcuffed again and marched in parade up streets and down avenues of the densest section of New York City.

I HAD worked all afternoon in the lawyers' offices with one object in view, namely, the securing of bail for the imprisoned men. I succeeded. I now got busy with my own bail, the court having fixed it in advance at $15,000. In the morning I walked from my lawyers' offices to the Post-Office Building and surrendered myself, being immediately released on surety which was waiting in the office of the United States Commissioner. As I left the building I recognized scores of Scheftels customers. Several grasped my hand.

The atrocity grew as the circumstances came up under review and I had time to connect and collate the facts leading up to it. Gradually the whole truth revealed itself. I can relate only part of it. The full, detailed story would extend itself into a volume, and the space here at my command is limited. I learned that from the moment the Special Agent had been put on the scent with permission to put us out of business he had behaved like a man who had but one object in life, namely, to turn the trick.

Evidence was now forthcoming that he had tried several times to get the backing of the United States Attorney's office of New York in the enterprise before finally going ahead, and that there alone he had shown an inclination to stop short of shouldering the whole responsibility. I learned that from the moment he set foot in New York he advertised that he had come to put B. H. Scheftels & Company "on the bum," and that he would not rest until "Rice and everybody connected with the corporation" had been "put away."

His efforts attracted the attention of sundry newspaper editors with Wall Street affiliations and also enemies generally who hastened to coöperate with him. His office as a Special Agent of the Department of Justice gave to his statements weight which would not have been given to them had he as an individual sponsored the charges. His official position imparted exaggerated importance to his statements in the eyes of newspaper men, and, after the raid, to the public.

The Special Agent drafted the services of a tool to back him up before the Assistant United States attorneys in New York with testimony which has since been recanted over the signature of the false witness.

IN THE September number of ADVENTURE I called attention to some of the atrociously false statements that were published on the day following the raid. I gave only an inkling. The newspapers declared that Ely Central had cost the Scheftels company 5 cents per share, that the capital stock was overissued, and that the property was worthless. Jumbo Extension, which has since distributed $95,000 in dividends to its stockholders, has still a treasury reserve of $100,000 and is selling to-day in the markets at a share valuation of about one quarter of a million dollars for the property, was also described as a "fake stock." Rawhide Coalition, which has produced upward of $400,000 in bullion, and which is to-day recognized as one of the substantial gold mines of the Far West, was labeled plain junk. Bovard, which represented an investment of nearly $100,000 for property account and mine development and which had been promoted at 10 cents per share on representations that it was a "prospect," was stated to be a raw steal.

Digitized by Google

The Scheftels corporation was said to have got away with millions of dollars by selling "fake mining stocks." It was also stated that I had profited to the extent of millions for my personal account. The Scheftels mailing-list was described as a regulation "sucker list," notwithstanding the fact that the principal names that were on it were stockholders in Guggenheim companies.

The ringleaders were pictured as myself —"a man with an awful Past"—and the "notorious character," "Red Letter" Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan was styled as the facile letter-writer who had addressed the "suckers" and hypnotized them, principally widows and orphans, to withdraw their money from the savings-banks and send it to the Scheftels sharks. "Red Letter" Sullivan was also referred to as a man with a "Past."

The true facts regarding Mr. Sullivan's connection with the Scheftels company were these: A few months before, he had applied for a position. He was then employed as manager of a Boston stock-brokerage office. He was awarded the job of time-clerk in the stenographers' department.

His job, while employed with the Scheftels company, was to see that the stenographers reported on time, did their work properly and were not paid for any services they did not render. He had little or nothing whatever to do with the correspondence department. He never dictated any answers to letters received by the Scheftels company. Never was he employed in an executive capacity by the Scheftels company. We knew little or nothing of the "Red Letter" title with which he had been decorated. The first we learned of it was in the newspapers after the raid. Investigation revealed that ten years before, while a broker in Chicago, he had issued a weekly market letter which was printed on red paper.

I have thus far not given space to one of the greatest wrongs connected with this disgraceful proceeding—the wrong and damage inflicted upon a multitude of helpless stockholders. While the Special Agent of the Department of Justice and his armed followers were wrecking the Scheftels offices and terrorizing the place, the Scheftels group of mining stocks was being savagely raided on the Curb and enormous losses were inflicted on the public. Thousands of margin accounts were wiped out in less time than it takes to tell of the massacre. Declines in Ely Central, Jumbo Extension, Rawhide Coalition and Bovard Consolidated exceeded $2,000,000. This loss was distributed among approximately fourteen thousand shareholders of record and as many more not of record.

This large army of innocent shareholders was helpless. From such species of confiscation the law affords no relief or recourse, except actual acquittal of the arrested persons, in whom lies the confiding investor's only chance for the market rehabilitation of his securities.

A TOOL'S CONFESSION

THE signed confession of the Tool of the Special Agent, who appeared before Assistant Attorneys Dorr and Smith at the United States Attorney's office in New York at the behest of the agent, which says he gave false testimony, and the voluntary statement of John J. Roach, a stock broker who was employed by the now defunct firm of Frederick Simmonds, regarding the relations between the Special Agent and that firm, while Special Agent of the Government, reveal the weak foundations of the Government's charges.

The Tool, prior to the raid, had been in the Scheftels employ. For a few months he had been a traveling business-getter for the firm. Then he was discharged. He associated himself with Frederick Simmonds, a member of the Consolidated Stock Exchange. Mr. Simmonds was badly in debt. The Tool had no money. The Agent, when he was trying to get the United States Attorney's office in New York to agree that the evidence (?) collected was sufficient to warrant a raid, prevailed upon the Tool to appear before the assistant attorneys and give testimony.

In this story the chief value of the Tool himself is that he has no value. He made his statements against us to Mr. Dorr. Then he gave me a statement, signed in the presence of witnesses, recanting the statements made to Mr. Dorr. To this he later added a written postscript enforcing his recantation. Then he re-recanted and said that a large part of his first recantation, signed by him and initialed by him on each page with his initials was false. The reader is left to judge just which one of the Tool's three positions is the one in which he tells the truth. It is obvious that he must be lying in the two others, and it

Digitized by Google

is not impossible that he may be lying in all three—except that some of the stuff in his first recantation, which he later denies in his second, has been verified from other sources.

Here is the main point to bear in mind concerning the Tool,—the sovereign power of seizure, search and confiscation brought into play by our great Government without due process of law, was based in part on the flimsy testimony of such a person. Thousands of investors suffered from the blow, as well as myself and associates.

MR. ROACH, in his statement, has no hesitation in saying bluntly and without equivocation that the Simmonds firm ran what is commonly considered a bucket-shop and that the Special Agent of the Department of Justice had shared in its profits; also, that as soon as he (Roach) discovered the true conditions he severed his connection with the establishment and devoted his time thereafter to saving the money of his customers. It would appear from the Roach statement that he was largely instrumental in bringing about the crisis that resulted in the suspension of the Simmonds firm and in the disclosures of the Special Agent's connection therewith. These facts have become, in most instances, matters of public record. They came out during the hearings before the receiver for the bankrupt concern. It was found that the liabilities of the "busted" firm were $85,000 and the assets 100 shares of cheap mining stock and between $1,500 and $2,000 in cash.

It was at this conjuncture that the Special Agent was allowed to resign from the Department of Justice. The Tool he had foolishly used had proved to be a two-edged one. The Agent had been "hoist by his own petard."

THE GUGGENHEIMS

PROBABLY the most surprised branch of the Government at the time of the Scheftels raid was the Post-Office Department. The crime charged was misuse of the mails. Why, if the Scheftels aggregation were guilty, didn't the Post-Office Department do the raiding? Why didn't it issue a fraud order? The Scheftels company has since been declared solvent by the courts and the temporary receiver discharged. To this day no fraud order has been issued. Only a short period before the raid, a presentation on the part of the Post-Office Department of all of the evidence in the case had been met with a decision that there was no ground for action.

That the Guggenheim interests did not fail to take advantage of the plight of the House of Scheftels immediately after the raid finds conclusive proof in the transpirations in the Ely mining camp. Soon after the Special Agent descended on the Scheftels offices, an application in Ely was made for a receiver to take charge of the assets of the Ely Central Copper Company. The attorneys making the application were Chandler & Quale, attorneys for the Nevada Consolidated Copper Company, a Guggenheim enterprise. When the court appointed a receiver he named this firm as attorneys for the receiver. Attorney J. M. Lockhart for the Ely Central made a protest that these lawyers, because of their connection with the Nevada Consolidated were not the proper persons to protect the interests of the now defenseless Ely Central stockholders. Then the court appointed another attorney, named Boreman.

Shortly after the receiver was appointed, he applied to the courts for permission to sell to the Nevada Consolidated for $30,000, which represented the entire cash indebtedness so far as the receiver knew, the surface rights to a large acreage of Ely Central and the rights through Juniper Canyon. This, if accomplished, would have given to the Nevada Consolidated a railroad right of way that would have solved the problem confronting it of the transportation of the ores from the lower levels of the steam-shovel pit. Without such an outlet these ores could not have been handled without great expense and much difficulty. The benefits that would have accrued to Nevada Consolidated were almost incalculable. At the same time, such action would effectually cut the Ely Central property into two parts. According to the petition it was stipulated that in selling the surface rights the Ely Central should cede to the Nevada Consolidated practical ownership, because it was specified that Ely Central could not interfere in its mining operations with any rights granted. Attorney Lockhart of Ely Central fought the receiver and his attorneys and won a victory. The Ely Central property was saved intact for the stockholders.

Digitized by Google

Later, an application was made to the court to sell the entire property of the Ely Central for $150,000. This was believed to be in the interests of the Nevada Consolidated. In answer, a petition was filed to discharge the receiver on the ground that the court originally appointing him had no jurisdiction. The court finally decided that it was without jurisdiction, because neither fraud nor incompetency had been proved, and the property had not been abandoned. The receiver was discharged.

WHAT has been the attitude of the Department of Justice since the raid was made? What did it discover and what has been done? Since the raid the Government has spent several hundred thousand dollars to disclose sufficient evidence from the books to make a case of any kind. One stand after another has been taken only to be abandoned after exhaustive research for evidence to sustain the original excessive pretenses. Grand Jury after Grand Jury has thrashed over masses of evidence presented them. Armies of accountants have worked day and night for weeks and months in an effort to substantiate the action of the authorities who were led into the commission of a grave wrong.

The charge that the Scheftels corporation sold fake mining stocks has fallen to the ground. Government examinations of the properties have revealed them to be all that they were cracked up to be. Careful and industrious reading of the mass of market literature sent through the mails by the Scheftels corporation has failed to disclose deliberate misrepresentation regarding the potentialities of any of the mining properties.

The Scheftels corporation transacted considerable margin business with its customers in the stocks which it sponsored—Ely Central, Jumbo Extension, Rawhide Coalition and Bovard Consolidated. If the Scheftels corporation was run by rascals wouldn't they have been tempted frequently to throw their weight on top of the market and endeavor to break the price of stocks to wipe out the margin traders? Did the Government find any evidence of this in the books? No. It found evidence—overwhelming and cumulative—that on nearly all occasions the Scheftels corporation actually exhausted its every resource to support the market in its stocks and hold up the price in the interests of stockholders. Evidence was also found in quantity that the Scheftels company discouraged the practise of margin-trading.

The superseding indictment handed down by the Grand Jury late in August, 1911, eleven months after the raid, eliminates the charge of mine misrepresentation regarding the Scheftels promotions and reduces it practically to one of bucket-shopping.

Not less than 85 per cent. of the total brokerage transactions of the Scheftels corporation were in their own stocks, and at nearly all times in the Scheftels history it had on hand, put up on loans or in banks under option, anywhere from three million to seven million shares of these securities. It actually bought, sold and *delivered* in this period over fifteen million shares of stock!

As stated in ADVENTURE for November, the Scheftels corporation made it a practise to sell stocks short on the general list as an insurance against declines in the market which might carry down the price of its own securities, and this, in the finality, is what the Government, after the expense of hundreds of thousands of dollars and the employment of the wisest of counsel, is seemingly compelled to tie to in order to justify in the eyes of the great American public the use of the rare power of seizure, search and arrest by one of its Special Agents and of its denial of a prayer for a hearing to the victims which was made before the arbitrary power was used.

WHAT is the lesson of my experience—the big broad lesson for the American citizen? This is it:

Don't speculate in Wall Street. You haven't got a chance. The cards are stacked by the "big fellows" and you can win only when they allow you to. The information that is permitted to reach you as to market probabilities through the financial columns of the daily newspapers is, as a rule, poisoned at its fountain and has for its major purpose your financial undoing. As for the literature of stock brokers it is as a rule even more misleading. Few brokers ever dare to tell the truth for fear of embittering the interests and being hounded into bankruptcy.

As for myself, what excuse have I had for catering to the gambling instinct? This is it: I thought the promoter and the public could both win. I now know that this

Digitized by Google

happens only rarely. The public hasn't got a chance.

I have not got a dollar. Who profited?

The answer is: The aggregate. The world has been the gainer. It is richer for the gold, the silver, the copper, and other indestructible metals that have been brought to the surface, as a result of this endeavor, and added to the wealth of the nation.

But for the gambling instinct and the promoter who caters to it, the treasure-stores of Nature would remain undisturbed and fallow and the world's development forces would lie limp and impotent.

In Conclusion:—*Herewith ends the story of Mr. Rice's "Adventures With Your Money." It is this magazine's province to seize upon adventure in whatever field it is to be found. And adventure is of many kinds and of many places. It waits among the wild beasts and savages in the far quarters of the earth; it bursts suddenly into the peaceful and darkened parlor of a quiet New England home. It hovers over the Seven Seas, or rises suddenly before your eyes in the busy humdrum of a city street. In the wars of men it waxes fat, and who in times of peace can say that it is not lurking at his elbow unrevealed? You may seek it all the day with unsuccess and wake from peaceful slumber in your accustomed bed to meet it in a flash of light and the cold rim of a revolver-muzzle. Or you may rise from uneventful sleep to find it waiting at your office desk.*

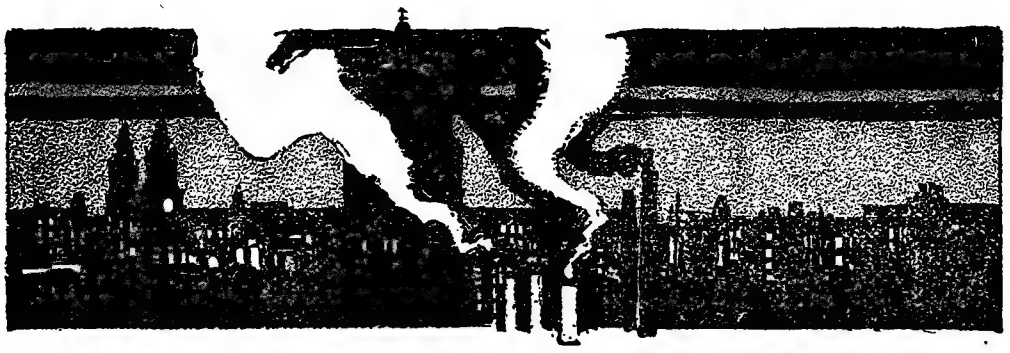
And it may spring from the Spirit of Youth and the Restless Flame that burns in some men's breasts. Or come straight from the hands of that mysterious goddess, Chance. Or stern Necessity may thrust it in your face.

Is there a key to the door that opens to it? A magnet to draw you to its hiding-place? Perhaps not. But there is one thing with which it often travels hand in hand, one thing it seeks in many lands—and is sought by. Gold.

The treasure-chest, the laden Spanish galleon, the lost jewels, the rifled safe—all these. Yes, and the busy marts of trade, the city office and the village store. Wherever men hunt and fight and die for gold.

And so we found in Mr. Rice's quest for golden money a story rich in the very essence of adventure. Who does not thrill a little—if with no more than avarice, and Avarice knows Adventure well—at the mere word when men speak of mines of gold, of lost claims, of the struggle to tear rich metals from the heart of Mother Earth? The rough days of our Great West, with their long toll of lives and fortunes made and saved and lost—is there not food for Adventure here? And Wall Street. There, too, are life and fortune tossed from hand to hand, and trampled under foot or borne aloft, and saved or lost.

A dramatic tale, the life of George Graham Rice, and so a tale for us. It might have been made a muck-raking attack on men and institutions. It might have been made a number of things. But to us it was a story of adventure—the tale of a struggle waged upon a battle-field more or less familiar to us all. And as such we have presented it.—THE EDITOR.



Digitized by Google

The Host

Wells Hastings

PULSING with life the teeming city roars
With all the busy traffic of high noon;
Like mammoth hives the great department stores
Are humming their unceasing, busy tune;
Trucks rattle by, and down the chasmed street
Sounds the loud tocsin of the trolley gong,
The murmur of innumerable feet
And the street vendor's rythmic, tuneless song.

But mid the glare and tumult unconcerned
There files a dim procession from the past,
A glorious host from some far shore returned
To strive among us gaily to the last.
There goes D'Artagnan on his yellow steed
With the great Athos pressing by his side,
And Don Quixote, slender as a reed,
Young Lochinvar with his sweet, blushing bride.

There prick the knights who sat 'round Arthur's board,
There stalks Horatius in his dripping mail,
The pirate Kidd with all his swarthy horde,
And the Norse Eric eager to set sail.
A thousand thousand in a countless host
Go all unheedful of the city's din,
Adventurers of ev'ry land and coast
Of stainless honor, or of scarlet sin.

Can you not see them there, and there, and there?
Does Earth seem old and all enchantment gone?
For him who wills there's magic in the air,
And city noontide's tinged with fairy dawn.

Digitized by Google

THE GRATITUDE OF "ARMY"

by Fred C. Kelly

"LITTLE JACK," known in a score of cities as a skilled and chance-taking burglar, walked out of a modest florist's shop, carrying a ponderous bouquet that contained nine different colors.

As he passed the first corner, Patrolman Potts nodded and looked at Jack's floral burden with friendly and curious interest. Jack did not evade the policeman's glance, for the relations between his sort and the men in brass and blue were not strained. "You can live here, but you musn't work here," was the attitude of the police, and the "profession" respected it.

"Some blossoms for a skirt?" inquired Patrolman Potts.

"Naw," replied Jack, "they're for 'Army.' He was a good pal!"

"That's a white thing to do," observed Potts. "He sure was a friend of yours."

"He was that!" And Jack with his flowers strolled on.

A certain episode had made the friendship between Army and Little Jack notorious. Everybody who reads newspapers knew about it. People would have stopped and stared at the burglar with the bouquet, if they had known who he was. But there was nothing about Jack's appearance to suggest his line of endeavor. He wore a purplish blue serge suit that revealed his compact, stocky frame, shirt with soft collar and a brown derby—all more suggestive of a mechanic on a half-holiday than a burglar.

It was Jack's genteel appearance, combined with a native geniality and a reputation for cool nerve, that made him the idol of the crowd at Guffey's, one of the most famous "hang-outs" in the country for people of Jack's sort.

Noteworthy among the people about Guffey's had been Jack's friend and admirer, Army. That was the only name anybody knew him by—just Army. There was nothing military about the title. Somebody had dubbed him that because he had only one arm. Army was a retired burglar—retired because of his lost arm and a case of tuberculosis. The walk from his squalid room in the lodging-house next door, marked about the limit of his endurance. Between the charity of the Guffeyites and the free-lunch table he managed to live.

When Little Jack was in town, Army lived high and the sky-line seemed less gray. He had plenty of tobacco in his pocket then and ate with regularity. Whenever Jack reached Guffey's, after an absence of a few weeks, the first thing he did was to learn whether Army's room-rent was paid and whether he were certain of food for another month.

Occasionally he would give him an old suit of clothes. Still more important, he always managed to throw Army into a cheerful mood. Other habitués of Guffey's might give him money, but they regarded him as an eye-sore. Jack always took him to joke with him, to give him a word of encouragement about his condition and make him feel that he had at least one friend who would stand by him.

"May be in the same fix myself some day," was Jack's only comment.

When Jack left town, "on a job," Army

Digitized by Google

tried to keep tab on him through the police news in the out-of-town papers. If Jack was supposed to be "working" in St. Louis, Army spent a nickel every morning at the little news-cart on the corner for a St. Louis paper. The next week he might switch to Chicago or Kansas City papers. He poured over the police news as nervously as an old woman, seeking and hoping not to find. Occasionally he saw an account of a burglary that had familiar earmarks. But as long as the paper spoke of only clues and said "no arrests have been made," he was pleased.

He was feverish with dread of reading that the police had arrested a man with three or four aliases, one of which identified his friend Jack. He usually threw aside the paper, however, with a sigh of relief. For Little Jack was not the kind that got caught every time a burglar-alarm sounded. Not infrequently he robbed a house with completeness and dispatch and then hid in a second house and robbed it while the police searched for the man who entered the first house.

After each feat of this sort, Jack added a cubit to his stature in the eyes of Army. But both Army and Jack knew that it was at best a matter of percentages. The burglar who plays the game and sticks at it, must count on a prison term sooner or later. Jack played for big stakes and took long chances.

ON ONE occasion, he was held for trial on a charge of shooting a policeman. As he sat in the courtroom, on the third floor of the criminal courts building, awaiting the jury's verdict, he kept complaining to the deputy sheriff at his side of the oppressive heat of the courtroom. The deputy raised a large window back of them. In the course of an hour the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty." On his way from the courtroom Jack confided to the deputy that his complaint about the heat was prompted solely by a desire to have the window raised that he might run and jump out if the verdict went against him.

"You'd have struck that asphalt below and been killed," the deputy observed.

"I'd have taken the chance," replied Jack. "It looked better to me than being caged up for twenty years or so."

That demonstration of nerve became one of the stories that Army loved to tell.

There was another person on whom Little Jack showered much more generosity than he did on Army. Her name was Grace, and she was a living example of the risk a parent runs in bestowing that name on a girl. She was adequate but supple of form, knew how to make her clothes attract attention, and was handsome according to a certain standard.

Place Grace on a crowded street-car and every man would glance at her a second time, but none would give her his seat. To Jack's notion, she represented all that was incomparable in womanhood—all that was worth having for one's own. He was always buying her presents. Her fingers and corsage were covered with flashy jewelry that represented his idea of splendor. Once he bought her a hat that contained more colors than there were in the bouquet he was carrying when Patrolman Potts spoke to him. She seemed especially appreciative of the more personal gifts.

Occasionally he would bring her a box of rouge or something he thought would impart a more engaging color to her hair. She had been wearing her hair in conventional blonde, but Jack saw a head of hair at a variety show that was more of a bronze, and he asked Grace if she would mind making a change. Thus freely were such matters discussed between them.

"That's a swell color, kid!" Jack would explain, when he beheld an almost lifelike flush of paint on her cheek. And she would thrill with a sense of having attempted and accomplished.

Grace and Jack frequently sat at a table in the back room at Guffey's and drank beer. Habitués of the place did not all agree with Jack that Grace was all that was ideal in womanhood. But they all thought it wise not to pass criticism on her face, figure or character. A bartender at Guffey's had once made a discourteous remark about the woman, and Jack had given him a black eye that lasted three weeks.

Army alone ventured to shake his head dubiously when Jack expanded on Grace's charms. His attitude was not due to jealousy of Jack's attentions, either.

"A woman's apt to make a fool of a man," was the way he sized it up.

Digitized by Google

There came a time when Jack was seen no longer in the society of Grace and when she was put to a test of fidelity. Jack got in wrong down in New York and seemed elected to a trip to Sing Sing, but through the maneuvering of a "fall lawyer" got off with only a year on "the island."

Now, Grace had enjoyed Jack's attention. She had been sincere with him and had been willing enough to be regarded as his girl. But, with Jack away, the proposition was different. Hers was not a disposition by habit or temperament to pine away and isolate herself from male society. It was not long until Guffeyites began to see Grace more and more in the company of one "Slim Harry." Slim seemed to own her, body and soul.

Army was the first to notice the new affair and he predicted that there would be trouble. Others about the place took the same view. Jack would probably kill Slim.

Slim would have disappeared before Jack's return if he had dared. But he feared the taunts of his fellows. He was afraid to appear afraid.

Time marched on and the people about Guffey's began to think of the day when Jack would return. They had learned the exact date of his release and they counted the days with the zest of a small boy awaiting Christmas. Excitement the Guffeyites had much of, but seldom as mere spectators. All counted on getting a real thrill out of the meeting between Jack and Slim.

Old Army was tense with excitement as the day approached. It was a matter of frequent comment that the hope of seeing Jack get his revenge was all that kept Army alive. He was so weakened by the disease which gnawed at his vitals that he climbed the rickety stairs of his room each night like a man who could never climb them again.

THERE were days when he was unable to leave his room at all. Guffey's bartender usually missed him and sent him up a bowl of soup or something from the free-lunch stand. It had ceased to be a matter of months or weeks but only of days until Jack should arrive, and Army hung on with almost uncanny tenacity.

"If I can only last till Jack comes!" was Army's greatest wish.

The day of Jack's discharge from prison dawned. His arrival at Guffey's could now be measured by hours.

But another day passed into the grim heretofore and Jack had not come. Even if Jack arrived within twelve hours, it looked doubtful whether Army could drag himself downstairs to witness the scene that would follow.

The evening of the second day arrived and Guffey's was charged with an ominous atmosphere of impending tragedy. Something was about to happen. Without knowing why, everybody felt it.

Men stood before the thinly varnished bar in the front room, ordering drinks and staring at the dingy mirror on which a stranger had drawn some lilies with white and green chalk—exchanging the roughly executed symbol of purity for a wicked grade of liquor. In the rear room Slim sat nonchalantly at the table with Grace.

All who entered the place must do so by the front door or by a door at the side of the front room. The crowd drank and waited.

At exactly eleven o'clock Army, looking more dead than alive, entered the side door and dragged himself to the rear room. Slim glanced up momentarily and went on talking to his companion.

With a queer gleam in his eyes Army suddenly took a revolver from his pocket, pointed it at Slim and pulled the trigger!

Slim fell over, dead almost instantly. His assailant also sank to the floor, too weak to stand after the supreme effort for which he had keyed himself. Grace shrieked, and everybody rushed back.

"They can't get me," were Army's first words, spoken in a hoarse whisper. "I'll be dead before the police come!"

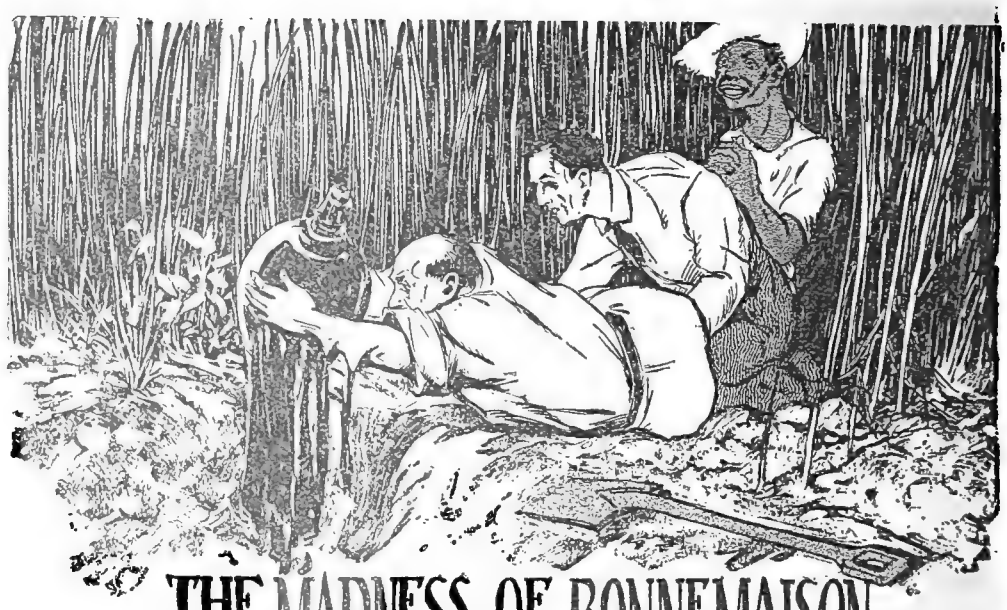
"But why did you do it?" somebody asked, in a tone of vexation rather than anger.

"I did it for Jack—for my friend!" he replied feebly.

"Jack would like to have done his own killing," retorted a bystander.

"I did it to keep Jack from doing it," whispered Army. "He's been my friend. Now I've done this for him. He'd have shot him and got a life sentence. What'd a life sentence mean to me!"

Digitized by Google



THE MADNESS OF BONNEMAISON

BY NEVIL G. HENSHAW.

THE little hunchback, Jean Le Bossu, took the gold-piece with which I paid him for his services and held it for a moment in the light of the camp-fire.

"Ah, the gold, m'sieu," said he. "Above liquor, above even the love of a woman, it has been the ruin of some men. Always, when I see it, I am reminded of the madness of my friend, Bonnemaison."

He paused a minute and then continued in the slow, queer French of his Louisiana patois:

"Now there is a story for you, m'sieu, although you may find it a hard one to believe. Do not fear to doubt me, for, should you do so, you will be little different from my companions.

"'What? Bonnemaison?' they cried, when I told them of it at the time. 'Make it any one else and we may find belief enough to keep from laughing in your face. The old fox has deserted his wife for a pair of eyes, as you know well. Just wait until the good Madame Bonnemaison gets her hands upon you!'

"But not having known the man, m'sieu, perhaps you will be able to understand. *Bien*, we shall see.

BONNEMAISON was the storekeeper at Anse Le Vert and, of all the dwellers in this country, he was the most contented and lazy. He was a huge, fat pig of a man, with broad, stumpy legs, like cypress blocks, and a round, red face upon which there was ever a smile.

Perhaps you have seen this sort, m'sieu. The sort that sits upon the porch all day, talking and drowsing, while the wife and children tend the store. The sort that walks scarce a mile a month, yet knows more of the doings of the neighborhood than the most energetic of travelers. The sort who, if the crops are bad, say, "*Bien*, they will be better next year" and is never worried, except possibly by the flies.

Such a one was Bonnemaison who, for more than thirty years, had spent his life in inquiring into the affairs of others, to the neglect of his own. Always he was questioning, when there was any one to question, and his knowledge embraced the past and the present alike.

Should an event occur a hundred miles away, he could give you its smallest detail. On the other hand, he could speak of one's great-grandfather as though he had known him from boyhood. He was like one of those

Digitized by Google

books that is called a history, was Bonnemaison, as he sat upon the shelf-like porch of his store, always ready to be questioned or consulted by any one who might come along.

One Fall, when Bonnemaison received his usual supply of Winter stock from Morgan City, he found that he had been swindled. Many of the goods were damaged and there were few that were not under weight.

"So," said he, after he had figured up his loss, "they are shrewd ones, those merchants out there. Next year I will go myself and perhaps I will have better success."

So, the following Fall, Bonnemaison went to Morgan City. It was his first journey in several years and he made the most of it. A good month before his departure he began bidding his friends farewell and, when he finally went down to the bayou to take his place upon Pierre Lartigue's little sloop, the entire village escorted him.

"Adieu, my friends, adieu," he called, as the boat drew away upon the rising tide. "When I return I will have enough news to last you for the rest of your lives."

In less than a week Bonnemaison was back again and the porch of his store was crowded with those who had come to hear of his adventures. But though he gossiped with them as he had done before, somehow it was not the same. His words were vague, his air was absent, it seemed almost as though something had at last arrived to disturb the tranquillity of his mind.

As the days passed this change became the talk of the village.

"It is the city life," said the older folk. "Having tasted the delights of it, he will never be satisfied until he has returned."

"Bonnemaison has been bewitched by a pair of eyes," said the younger ones. "We have seen those beauties of Morgan City and we know."

It was while the mystery was at its height that I arrived in Anse Le Vert having finished my fishing upon the bay. I was young in those days and the ducks had already begun to fly, so, without thought of rest, it was my intention to stop only long enough for my supplies and ammunition before putting out again.

THEREFORE I hurried up the street to the store of Bonnemaison where, as usual, the big proprietor was sitting out in his great arm-chair. It was not until I had started to mount the steps of the porch that he caught sight of me, whereupon a strange thing occurred.

Rising to his feet, with amazing alacrity, he stood beaming and smiling, as though he had just discovered something for which he had searched long and hard.

"Le Bossu!" said he, half speaking to himself. "The very man!"

Then, turning to me directly, he added earnestly.

"Come inside, Jean. I have something to say to you."

It was not until I had followed him into his private office and he had locked the door behind me that I began to be alarmed, for, from what I had heard and from his strange behavior, it looked as though he had become little better than a madman. And when he unlocked a drawer of his desk and drew forth a short and heavy club of polished brass I sprang with my back to the door, seizing a chair with which to defend myself.

At my alarm Bonnemaison burst into a laugh, not the deep, mellow rumble of his former days, but the shrill, high neigh of intense excitement.

"Ah Jean! Jean!" he cried. "So you think me mad, do you? Take heart, man, and do not fear me, for I am about to make your fortune. You see this club? An ugly weapon, is it not? I took it from a sailor who had attacked me with it, in a coffee-house in Morgan City. One blow he gave me before I seized his wrist, breaking it like a pipe-stem.

"And, after I had got safely away, I examined his pretty plaything which had come so near to being my fate. Look at it, Jean, and tell me what you think of it."

Taking the club from his outstretched hand, I examined it closely. As I have said, it was short and heavy and made from tip to butt of smoothly polished brass. Also, just below the handle there was a small slit projection by which one could attach it to the belt.

"It is an old club of the Havana police," said Bonnemaison, after I had finished my inspection. "Twist the handle and you will see what an excellent weapon it really is."

Following his advice I twisted the handle, which unscrewed quite easily, disclosing a long, wicked-looking blade attached to its lower end.

Ah, but that was an ugly tool, m'sieu!

Digitized by Google

Half club, half knife, it gave its owner the advantage of two weapons in one. But evidently its last possessor had known nothing of its double quality, for the blade was nicked and rusty, in marked contrast to the polished brightness of its sheath. Also, where the blade entered the handle, the packing had been torn away, showing almost an inch of its small, rod-like end.

"Ah!" said Bonnemaison. "So you have noticed the packing is gone? Suppose we take a look at it? Although you may not believe me, it is the cream of the whole affair."

Once more unlocking the drawer of his desk, the storekeeper drew forth a sheet of paper. It was dull and yellow with age and rust, seamed by a hundred creases from where it had been folded to form a makeshift packing for the knife-blade. Sprawled across it in faded ink was writing in a language which I did not understand.

"That is Spanish," said Bonnemaison, and began to read, translating the words into French as he went along.

It was a page from the log of the schooner *Josita*, m'sieu, and it told of her chase across the Bay Vermillion by a revenue cutter and of her flight through the tangled network of bayous beyond. For three days she had been pursued, fleeing blindly along the narrow water alleys of the sea marsh and upon the fourth, seeing that they had escaped for a time at least, the crew had dropped anchor in a shallow inland lake of so desolate appearance that it was evident they were the first visitors to its shores.

Here, after much debate, they had decided to bury their cargo, feeling sure that the cutter would be waiting for them upon the outside. Therefore, having chosen as a starting point a huge, blasted oak which alone stood on guard at the head of the lake, they had dug two trenches, carrying them out in a westerly direction, until they were long enough to accommodate those goods which they wished to conceal. And so, having buried the cargo, they had put back to the bay, making careful note of their course that they might return when the coast was clear.

THIS much Bonnemaison read to me, turning over the paper and going through a line or two of the writing upon its under side. Then, pausing suddenly, he refolded his strange document and returned it carefully to its drawer, turning the key upon it.

"And the course? Is it not there?" I asked impatiently, for my interest was aroused.

Bonnemaison smiled.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "It is all there, my friend, where it will keep very well until you are ready to use it."

"Then you wish me to go after this cargo?" I inquired.

"Most assuredly," said he. "Otherwise, why should I have let you into this secret, which I have told to no one? For more than a month I have racked my brain to find one both trustworthy and well versed in the knowledge of the coast and I had been about to give up in despair when you came to my deliverance. Surely I can trust you, Jean?"

"Of course," said I. "But can you trust this paper of yours? Even though what it says be true, there is every probability that the smugglers returned and dug up their cargo as they had planned."

Bonnemaison leaned forward in his chair and his little pig-like eyes were wide with eagerness and excitement.

"They were not smugglers, Jean. They were pirates!" said he slowly. "Also, they never returned. They were caught off the Cannes Brules by the cutter and were destroyed to a man, together with their secret. *Dieu*! Jean, do you suppose that I have gossiped all my life for nothing; that I have had the history of this country for the past hundred years at my finger-tips without putting it to some advantage? I knew the fate of the *Josita* long before ever I saw this paper, and also to whom she belonged."

Pausing, he lowered his voice to a whisper and spoke a name.

Ah, that name of Lafitte, m'sieu! It needed but the mention of it for one of this country to see a vision—a vision of great chests of broad gold-pieces, into which one could dip his arms to the elbow, as in water. And to this day it is the same, as you can see by the holes which the treasure-seekers dig each year along the coast.

"Lafitte!" I cried excitedly. "You can not mean it, Bonnemaison! Most certainly you can count on me, but I must have companions. No less than two, I should say, for such a trip as you propose."

"Of course," he agreed. "I have already

Digitized by Google

thought of another man. The third will be myself."

Now of all the strange things which I had heard that morning, this was the most surprising. Bonnemaison going upon such an expedition? The huge, lazy storekeeper, who all his life had scarce walked the length of the village street, setting forth through the perils of the sea marsh to that desolate spot where man had ventured but once before?

It was incredible! It was enormous! I stared at the great, slothful creature, whose name of "Goodhouse" seemed somehow so well suited to him, too stupefied to reply.

"And—and have you considered the matter?" I stammered finally.

"I have considered nothing else since my return," he replied. "For days, for weeks, I have fought against it, but it is no use. I must find that gold myself, Jean! My own hands must be the ones to lift it from its hiding-place. I can see them, I tell you; they are ever before my eyes—the round, dull pieces in their chest of rusty iron!"

It was the beginning of his madness, m'sieu, the first, vague pangs of the lust for gold. His eyes shone, his face was suffused with blood, he seemed to almost increase in size. Then, in an instant, his excitement departed from him, leaving him very white and calm.

"*Bien*," said he in a quiet voice. "Let us now consider the matter of terms."

In less than an hour everything had been arranged. We were to leave in my boat at high tide the following morning and Bonnemaison was to furnish all of the supplies. I was to receive one-third of anything we might find, for my services in guiding the expedition. The rest was to go to the storekeeper, as his hired man was only a huge, half-witted negro of the name of Grosse Tête, who, for a small amount, would be well satisfied to do the heavier work of the journey.

It was also arranged that the object of the expedition was to be kept a profound secret and, for this purpose, Bonnemaison had been feigning illness for some time. Therefore, when he announced his intention of spending a week or two at my camp upon the coast, that he might try the benefit of the fresh, salt air, there was little surprise.

We sailed next day at noon, and never had a stranger ship's company set forth upon that bayou!

First there was Bonnemaison, hot and perspiring despite the sharp November breeze, his huge bulk seeming almost too much for the frailness of my little craft. Then there was myself, a mere distorted shadow of a man, as you have perhaps observed, m'sieu. And lastly there was Grosse Tête, tall and broad and with the enormous, wooly head from which he had derived his name.

WE MADE good time to the mouth of the bayou and, after I had run out into the open bay, I handed the tiller to the negro and went forward to see Bonnemaison. He sat in the bow, huddled up against the mast, his eyes staring straight ahead toward the far-distant line of sea marsh.

"I have come for my course," said I. "As you will notice, we are now upon the bay."

Bonnemaison grunted, but he made no move toward his breast pocket where I knew he had concealed the paper.

"You can make the Cannes Brûlés when?" he asked, without relaxing his gaze.

"By night, if the wind holds," I replied.

"*Bien*," said he. "We will anchor there. In the morning I will give you your course for the following day."

Ah, but I was angry, m'sieu! Never in my life before had I been treated so. To have my course given me piecemeal day by day—was not that insult enough for any man?

"And is this the way in which you mean to trust me, m'sieu?" I asked hotly. "If so, you had better put about in search of one better suited to your ways!"

Bonnemaison turned his heavy head slowly and, for the first time since sailing, I had a look at his face. It was gray and drawn with fear and indecision, and I think that it was not until then that he fully realized the difficulties and dangers of his undertaking.

"I can not even trust myself in this matter," said he. "It is not of yourself that I am afraid, but of the negro. True, I have told him nothing, but—who can tell? Bear with me patiently, Jean, and your fortune is made. Consider those round, dull pieces. Can you not see them in their chest of rusty iron?"

Digitized by Google

Ah, that vision, m'sieu! It rose before my eyes broad and shining, dissolving my anger as the sun dissolves the mists upon the water. Calling a word of encouragement to Bonnemaison, I hastened back to the tiller and laid my course with never a thought save of that which would be awaiting me at my journey's end.

That night we anchored off the Cannes Brûlés and at daybreak the following morning, we started up the bayou. Quickly the great wall of sea marsh shut out the sparkling waters of the bay as though to show us, at the start, the full desolation of our journey.

And that was a desolate journey, m'sieu! Never in my life have I made a more dreary one. There were no songs, no stories, no laughter. Not even the little snatches of conversation so common among companies.

All day Bonnemaison sat silent and thoughtful, his gaze never wavering from the vision which lay far out over the wall of sea marsh. All day the big negro moved noiselessly about, dumb and obedient, like some faithful animal; his huge, black head as empty of thought as the wind-swept heavens above him. And all day the dead, forsaken stretches of the bayous dropped slowly past us, marsh and mud flat, mud flat and marsh, until the mind grew sick with its never-ending sameness.

Sometimes I think it was this monotony, rather than the thought of the gold, which caused the madness of Bonnemaison. At all events, from the fourth day out, he refused to leave his place in the bow, sitting there all night through the drenching fogs and dews, his eyes ever fixed in their ceaseless stare.

Each morning he gave me my course, reading it slowly from the paper and snarling like a wolf if I dared but peer at the writing which I could not understand. And thus we went on, slowly, patiently, unraveling the tangled skein of the unknown bayous as a housewife winds her yarn. Often we lost our way. Sometimes for hours we knew not whether our direction was right or wrong, but always, in the end, we would pick up our course, following it point by point to the bitter end.

Upon the eighth day when, by Bonnemaison's paper, we were but twelve hours sailing from our goal, the water of the bayou gave out. There was no question of tides. The nameless stream had simply shrunk away to a succession of mud-flats, bounded upon either side by little, sluggish streams of water.

To my surprise Bonnemaison made no complaint. In preparation for just such an event I had brought with me both my bateau and pirogue and, when I informed him that we must continue in them or put back to the bay, he set about the loading of supplies.

"And how is it that the *Josita* was enabled to make her way?" he inquired.

"At that time there was, no doubt, a good depth of water," I replied.

The deposits of the marshes are ever shifting and changing in the passing of the years. Perhaps the lake will also have shrunk to but a flat of mud.

And so, having taken with us provisions for two weeks, together with a gun and ammunition in case of game, we pushed ahead, the negro in the pirogue, Bonnemaison and myself in the bateau, poling from either end.

AH, BUT that was a heart-breaking journey! Three days it took us to make those twelve hours of sailing, and how we made them at all I have never known. It was push and heave and strain, over the endless mud-flats, working waist-deep in the mud and ooze, scorched by the sun at midday, only to be frozen by the fogs and mists of the night and early morning. And always the mosquitoes followed us in a whining, maddening cloud, flaying us to the bone.

Yet, through it all, Bonnemaison uttered never a whimper. Was it heroism or was it only the love of gold? I have never been able to say.

Consider the man, m'sieu, the huge, ease-loving gossip, fighting along foot by foot through the untrod wilderness, burning with fever, tortured by mosquitoes, a prey to the writhing, poisoned death which ever crossed his path. Think of his weight, of his softness, of the cold, relentless grasp of the marsh as he plunged his great limbs into its treacherous depths, withdrawing them with a report like that of a rifle.

One word, one whine from him, and we would gladly have turned back, yet he pushed ever forward. And, as he went, the flesh melted from his bones as a candle melts at nightfall.

It was late upon the afternoon of the

Digitized by Google

third day that we finally ended our journey and crept beneath the red eye of the setting sun into the utter, greater desolation of our goal.

Ah, m'sieu, that lake was a place such as few men have seen! It had no shores, no growths, no life of any kind. Only the long shining reaches of mud, pockmarked with pools, bare even of the monotonous wall of sea marsh. No snake marred the smoothness of its ooze, no fish broke the oily stillness of its shallow depths. It was not as though the place were dead. It was rather that it had never lived.

And, lifeless ourselves, through suffering and fatigue, we lay where we had fallen, forgetting our misery in the sleep of utter exhaustion.

It was late the following morning and the sun was high in the heavens, when I was awakened by Bonnemaison, a strange, new Bonnemaison, who clutched at me with trembling, eager fingers, babbling like a madman. Gone was his silence, his lethargy, he was all speech and excitement, droning away in a high whining voice which rasped upon one's nerves like the edge of a file.

"We must hurry and find the tree, that we may dig up the gold at once!" he kept repeating.

He could not wait a moment before seeing those pieces, those dull, round pieces in their chest of rusty iron. And so he went on until even the big, silent negro paused to stare at him, brushing a hand across his forehead, as he did when the mosquitoes were particularly annoying.

It was not until late that we finally found the tree, for the acids and poisons of the dreadful lake had eaten even into its iron wood, leaving only a short, rotten stump of a few feet in height. But the finding of the tree was as nothing to what came after. Hour after hour we dug into the line of the trenches, the negro and I, while Bonnemaison looked on, babbling at us with his ceaseless, whining drone. And, as we dug, the hopelessness of our task became ever more apparent, for the shifting, quaking soil of that lake shore was as incapable of sustaining our labor as is a pool of water.

Yet we persevered until, just at dusk, our shovels grated upon something hard.

Ah, but you should have seen Bonnemaison at that moment! The man was transfigured with joy and expectation. Throwing himself face downward amid the mud and ooze, he plunged in his great arms to the shoulders, grasping wildly at the object, until his fingers had obtained a hold. Slowly we dragged him to his feet again and with him came a great, round demijohn of greenish glass, half-full of some heavy liquid.

It was rum, m'sieu, such rum as you have never tasted and, at sight of it, Bonnemaison became indeed a madman.

"We must dig on," he commanded. "By moonlight, by firelight, using the boats for fuel if necessary!"

He prayed, he cursed, he threatened and, when we, too tired for further argument, returned to the camp, he sullenly withdrew from his place at the fire, growling and mumbling to himself, like a dog with a bone. Also, although usually the most temperate of men, he began to attack the rum, gulping it down in huge mouthfuls and growing even more silent and watchful as glass followed glass.

That night, as the saying is, I slept with both eyes open, for I had little doubt of what the end would be.

IT WAS Bonnemaison who woke us at daybreak and it was Bonnemaison who drove us the following morning until we were forced to cease our labor by the heat of the midday. In that time we discovered four more of the demijohns and a soft, pulpy mass which, years before, must have been a bale of goods.

And so, returning to our work with renewed encouragement, in the cool of the afternoon, we found our progress stopped in a manner which left little doubt of its being final.

It was quicksand, m'sieu, and, had I been less eager in my search, I would have noticed it before where it stretched away in a broad, quaking mass from the spot where we had made our last find. Casting my shovel upon it to test it, I saw it drawn slowly downward, as though by some invisible hand.

"You see," said I to Bonnemaison, "it is hopeless. Let us go now and arrange our belongings, so that they will be ready for our departure at daybreak."

"And if you worked from the pirogue?" he suggested.

"It would be the same," I replied.

Digitized by Google

"*Bien*," said he, and without another word he led the way back to the camp.

Ah, but I should have mistrusted his silence, m'sieu! Had he raved, there would have been nothing to fear.

On our arrival at camp I immediately set about the equipment of the bateau and thus it was some little time before I turned my attention to the pirogue. When I finally did so, it was to see the negro removing the last of the supplies with which it had been laden. Beside him stood Bonnemaison, our one gun in his hands, his pockets bulging with the shells that we had brought along. He had evidently been after the rum again and his eyes were ablaze with baffled fury.

"Grosse Tête is going to dig from the pirogue," said he sullenly. "Despite your objections, I say that it can be done!"

"And I say that it can not!" I cried. "Grosse Tête, you are going to your death! This man is mad and we must overpower him!"

Bonnemaison smiled, but he moved a step or two beyond our reach. Then, very slowly, he cocked his gun.

"We will proceed to the spot where, I promise you, Grosse Tête shall have his choice," said he quietly. "As for your overpowering me, I am at your disposal now or at any other time."

And so we returned to the scene of our labors, m'sieu. There was nothing else to do. The negro carried the pirogue and I trailed uncertainly behind, afraid to risk a run out of range, yet certain of what would befall me were I to approach too near.

On arriving at the spot where we had ceased digging, Bonnemaison ordered the negro to lay down his burden, with the bow well out upon the quicksand.

"Grosse Tête," said he, when this had been done, "you are here at the line, to make your choice. Before you lies gold of which you shall have your equal share, although it had not been my intention to so divide with you. Behind you is lead, two handfuls of it, which you will assuredly get, should you decide to turn that way. Come! It is for you to decide!"

There was scarce a moment's pause as the negro made his choice. Sometimes I think that he did not understand the matter at all. All his life he had obeyed the white men and had received his living for doing so. Now, when a white man commanded, there was nothing for him to do but to obey.

Pushing the pirogue until it rested entirely upon the quicksand, he seized his shovel and sprang inside. Once, twice, a dozen times he dug, while the pirogue settled slowly down and then, as the ooze came clutching at his ankles, he turned to retreat. Then the pirogue slid quietly under, and, with his shriek I turned away.

AH, M'SIEU, it was only a glimpse, but it was enough! Never will I forget that huge empty head, slipping slowly down, like an eclipse, across the red face of the setting sun! Those poor, animal features with their vaguely-dawning look of agony and surprise! I will see them to my dying day!

When I turned again, there was not even a ripple to break the smooth, shining surface of the quicksand. Bonnemaison stood just as I had left him, his gun still held in readiness, in the hollow of his arm.

"It was his weight. He might have known," said he, and again, in silence, we returned to the camp.

That night Bonnemaison ate no supper, although he continued to consume great quantities of the rum. As for myself, I hid the food of both within the pockets of my coat, together with the few supplies that I could obtain without arousing his suspicion. Then, loosening my knife in its sheath, more for the feeling of protection that it gave me, than for any good it might do, I took my place at the fire, to await that which I knew must come.

All night the vigil lasted, Bonnemaison drinking unceasingly, his gun across his knees, myself sitting at the distance which we seemed to have agreed upon, scarce moving save to tend the fire. And then, just at daybreak, Bonnemaison spoke again.

"It was his weight. He might have known," he repeated, as though he had fallen silent but a moment before. "Now you, Jean, are lighter—lighter by many pounds. You must try it to-day—in the bateau."

The moment had come and I rose to my feet, while Bonnemaison rose also. An instant he paused to cock his gun and in that instant I sprang, aiming low and reaching up with both hands for the triggers as I came to the level of his waist. The gun went off with a deafening roar, sounding

Digitized by Google

like some monstrous cannon amid the silence of that wilderness, and then, in the moment before his great strength had wrested it from my grasp, I spoke to him for the last time.

"I will wait three days for you at the boat, Bonnemaison!" I cried.

"I will have the rifle and, if you will advance with your hands above your head, I will allow you to come aboard. Otherwise, you will never get within range of your gun!"

Then I ran, as I have never run before, while he plunged after me, reloading as he came. Had it not been for his weight and the deepness of the mud, I might never have won clear, but, as it was, he was forced to see the uselessness of it, before he had gone a hundred yards.

Once more he fired, the shot falling short of me and then, as he paused to reload, I had my last sight of him, a vague gray bulk in the mist of the early morning, the smoking gun in his hand.

LE BOSSU paused and began to shake up the embers of the dying fire.

"And did you wait at the boat as you promised?" I asked.

The little man nodded.

"Oh yes, m'sieu," he replied. "Three days I waited, resting beneath closed hatches, for, although I had no load to push, my journey was nevertheless a hard one. But, as I had expected, Bonnemaison never appeared.

"Perhaps he met his fate upon the very day I left him. Perhaps he waited until the provisions ran out. Who can tell?

"But that he met it, I know. Sometimes I can see him, sitting upon his bateau at the edge of the quicksand, waiting for the terrible temptation to become great enough for him to make his try.

"And perhaps, if there is such a thing as spirits, Grosse Tête was there to see him as he sank slowly down. Perhaps he mocked him with his very words: 'It was his weight. He might have known!'"

THE PRETENDER

BY RAFAEL SABATINI

I WAS glad enough, in all faith, to call a halt at the inn at Rosthwaite in obedience to the importunities of my men, Peter and Andrew, who had borne with me the burden of the day at the horse-fair at Keswick.

It was approaching sunset when we gained the little hamlet, and there was still a good hour's ride home before us, so that it behooved us not to tarry overlong. Just time to wash the dust from our throats and give our legs an easing-space, from the saddle stiffness that was besetting us.

Half reclining on the cushioned window-seat of the empty inn parlor, I called to Blossom for a draught of October. A gar-

Digitized by Google

rulous old soul was this vintner; who suspected me—as for that matter did the whole countryside—of an imprudent attachment to the cause of Prince Charlie, and it was of that lost cause and the prince's alleged wanderings in the heather that he was discoursing to me when the advent of a stranger set a sudden bridle on his foolish tongue.

The newcomer was a tall, fair young man, wrapped about in a cloak and wearing a three-cornered hat so far forward upon his brow that it masked the upper portion of his face. He bore himself with an easy, graceful carriage rarely seen in our country parts, and through the dust that overlaid him one perceived his garments to be of a quiet elegance suggesting the South as his origin.

He paused at sight of me, and for a moment seemed to hesitate. Then, having paid me the honor of a close scrutiny, to my surprise he suddenly advanced upon me with a glad eagerness. He thrust back the hat from his brow, and the youthful face which he now disclosed—a pale, oval countenance, with full lips, prominent eyes and a flaxen tie-wig—was elusively familiar. He halted before me, leaning slightly toward me across the deal table, whilst I looked up and waited for him to speak. A moment or two he stood as if expecting some movement from me. Seeing that none came, his level brows were slightly knit, and a look of hesitation that amounted almost to alarm flitted across his face.

"Surely, surely, sir," said he, at length, and his voice was fresh and pleasant and softened by a slightly foreign enunciation, "surely I have the advantage to address Sir Jasper Morford?"

I smiled agreeably—his air and manner all compelled the friendliness—as I corrected his impression. "My name, sir, is Dayne—Richard Dayne of Coldbarrow." And again moved by the gallantry of his air, I added courteously, "your servant, sir."

He continued to stare at me, between astonishment and unbelief. "Why, surely—" he began; then halted, and—"'Tis very odd!" he muttered. "I see I am mistook. Your pardon, sir." And he dropped me a congé, all very brave and courtly.

"What is no less odd," I said, "is that not only should you have mistook me for one of your acquaintances, but that there is about yourself a something with which I seem acquainted."

He drew back sharply, and again alarm peeped at me from his eyes. Then, recovering: "'Tis very odd, as ye say," he answered, and now there was a note of coldness in his voice, an imperious note, that seemed to forbid the pursuance of my curiosity. "Again I crave your pardon, sir." He turned away, and crossing the room to the table remotest from me, called the landlord to supply his needs.

I sipped my ale and mused, my eyes upon his graceful back, until presently my attention was caught by a shadow that fell athwart my table. Idly I turned to seek the cause. For just one instant I had a glimpse of a face—blotched, villainous and unclean—pressed against the leaded window-pane, and of two red-rimmed eyes, evil and intent. The next moment, in a flash, even as I turned, the apparition vanished.

THAT a man should peer into an inn parlor was no great matter for astonishment; but that the man should be at such pains himself to avoid being seen was a circumstance sufficiently suspicious. Instantly the thought occurred to me that the ruffian's business might be with my young gallant across the room.

I resolved to watch, in the hope of learning more, of making sure; and to this end I set my pewter a little to the left, where the whole of the window was reflected on its polished surface. And now I sat on and smoked, my eye upon that reflection. Nor had I long to wait. Presently the face reappeared slowly and cautiously, and for all that it was too diminished and distorted by the pewter's surface to enable me to gather anything of its detail or expression, yet it was enough to inform me that the watcher had returned. I rose with leisurely nonchalance, and without turning, took up my measure and sauntered across the room to the young stranger.

"Ye'll forgive the liberty," said I, "but are ye like to be worth watching? Have ye cause to fear being watched, I mean?"

From the start and the expression of his eyes, 'twas very clear he had.

"I beg that ye'll not move. There is at this moment the most rascally face in Cumberland pressed against the window-pane."

His uneasiness grew so that my every suspicion was confirmed. Not a doubt but that here was some poor fugitive Jacobite with, as like as not, a price upon his handsome head.

Digitized by Google

He looked at me a moment with eyes that seemed to be seeking to fathom my very thoughts. Then he lowered his glance. "It is very kind in you to warn me, sir. 'Twere idle to pretend that I am in no danger, since in the pass to which things are come, you, sir, an entire stranger, are now my only hope. I have no claim upon you," he continued, his tone growing halting, as if fettered by a certain shyness, "and ye may marvel at the temerity—the effrontery that impels me to implore your aid in the desperate case in which ye find me."

"Sir," I answered readily, more and more assured with what manner of man I had to do, "I beg that ye'll command me freely. In so far as I may be able, I am most ready to assist you."

Again he looked at me, long and searchingly. "That, sir, is as kind as it is rash. Were I less hard-pressed I must refuse the service you so generously offer. But, being desperate, I have no other course but the selfish one of taking you at your word." Then in an altered, brisker manner—"You are well known in these parts?" he inquired.

I made answer that I was.

"And no doubt ye'll be a person of substance and reputation; to be seen in your company might mean the disarming of suspicion against me—for surely it can be no more than a suspicion at present. Were he certain, he'd not be content to watch. Will ye not join me, sir?" And he waved me to an empty chair by the table, and raised his voice to call the landlord.

Anon, when the latter had fetched me a fresh can and had withdrawn, the stranger —as I thought at first, for lack of other subject wherewith to entertain me—raised his measure to propose a toast. "The King!" said he, watching me very intently as he spoke.

I paused a moment before replying. Had he named the king he pledged, his meaning could not have been plainer than it was. Now, as I have hinted, for all that I had taken no part in the ill-starred rising—having been restrained from any such rashness by my far-seeing uncle, the sheriff—yet my heart was entirely with the Stuart cause, my sympathies all against the Dutch usurper. Nor had I in the least dissembled these feelings of mine, and if I caused any surprise in Cumberland at the time, it was at my remaining passive during the strife that was but lately ended. That passivity was mainly begot of my affection for my uncle, which was very deep, and tempered with a gratitude that compelled my obedience to his wishes in the matter.

NOTWITHSTANDING, in the presence of this stranger, certain caution beset me now and I hesitated. Then, drawn to him by the anxious, almost pathetic, glance with which he watched me and awaited my reply, I raised my pewter and in the same significant tone that he had employed—"The King!" I answered, and would have drunk, but that, leaning across, he set a hand upon my arm, and checked me.

"Which King?" quoth he, his voice dropping almost to a whisper. "Which King—*de jure*, or *de facto*?"

I met his glance and answered his eagerness with a smile. My heart went wholly out to him, and "The King *de jure*!" said I, to assure him that in me he had a friend upon whom he might depend.

His eyes brightened on the word, and then there was the click of a latch behind him; the door was thrust slowly open, and a burly ruffian, wearing the evil countenance and the red-rimmed eyes I had seen at the window, shuffled into the room. My companion flung a glance over his shoulder at the newcomer, and the other returned the glance with interest, a sneering smile investing the corners of his loose-lipped mouth. Then the fellow turned aside and shuffled slowly away to the seat which I had lately vacated, where he thumped the table for the landlord.

My Jacobite looked at me with eyes eloquent with apprehension, whereupon I immediately fell to talking loudly of commonplaces such as should lead a stranger to suppose him other than he was. I expounded to him upon the seasons, upon the excessive rains that we had lately had, and the urgent need of fine weather to bring on the crops. I discoursed of the horse-fair at Keswick, and to some extent of the business I had done there, airing opinions upon the breeding and rearing of horses, upon the tricks of horse-dealers, and the manner in which they made gulls of townsfolk.

My Jacobite entered into the spirit of my little comedy, and played his part in it with a quick and ready wit, now agreeing, now disputing, and generally conveyed the impression that he had no interests in

Digitized by Google

life outside of crops and cattle. But his appearance was prone to belie the suggestion. His laced hat, his tie-wig, his fine boots of Spanish leather, with their silver spurs, to say nothing of the dress-sword that hung on his thigh, were all so many contradictions to his talk of husbandry. Out of the corner of my eye I watched the spy—for that I now accounted him—and to my dismay observed the growth of that sinister smile of his as he sat there, his eyes upon us, his ears attentive.

The suspense grew to a pitch that was unendurable. Better force him into action, and learn the worst that was to be expected from him, rather than prolong the present state of things. I resolved upon the bolder course, and rose.

"Come, Jack," said I, giving my Jacobite the first name that entered my mind, to show the spy that we were by no means chance acquaintances, "it is time we were getting homewards. The nags will be rested by now."

"Why, yes, Ned," said he, very promptly following my example. He stood a moment to finish his ale, entirely at his leisure, then turned to cross with me to the door. But at the same moment the spy rose too, and casting aside all further attempt to dissemble his purpose, he gained the door ahead of us and set his back to it.

"Not so fast, sirs," said he, leering his wicked relish. He was the cat, and we were the mice that had made sport for him.

"Why, what's this?" said I, covering my fears in a display of angry astonishment. "The door, sirrah!"

"Pooh!" said he, eying me contemptuously. "You may go your ways, Mr. Dayne of Coldbarrow. My business is not with you. None has bethought him yet of setting a price on your head. My affair," and he turned to my companion, "is with your Royal Highness."

His Royal Highness! I fell back in my amazement, doubting at first, and then convinced, and marveling how it came that I had been so long in doubt. Indeed I should have put a name long since to that pale, oval face, those prominent eyes and full red lips. Here, in the flesh, stood "Bonnie Prince Charlie" himself. So convinced was I that I had not the presence of mind to laugh, as did the Prince—disdainfully as at an egregious blunder.

"Lackaday!" said he. "D'ye address me as 'Royal Highness'?"

"Yourself, Charles Stuart," answered the other grimly.

"'Tis a jest, to be sure," the Prince assured him, frowning, "but I find little humor in it. Ye'll be letting us pass, sir."

The ruffian leaned forward, leering still. "If I'm wrong, the constable of Rosthwaite shall tell me on't; or, if not the constable, why then the sheriff."

"D'ye dare detain me?" demanded my companion, and he drew himself up with a great dignity.

"Ye see," quoth the other, at his ease, "there's a matter of a thousand guineas on your head. I'm a poor man, your Highness——"

"Tush, sir! Ye're mistook, I tell you," the Prince broke in impatiently. "Out of my way there!" And he clapped a hand to the silver hilt of his sword.

The ruffian flashed a pistol from his pocket. "I'm not mistook," said he, and laughed. "Ye'll be stepping as far as the constable's with me. And not an inch of that steel of yours, or I'll shoot ye first, and drag you by the heels to the constable afterward. I'm a plain-spoken man, your Highness. I like to be understood."

AT THAT the Prince's self-possession entirely left him. He turned to me a face that was blank with dismay. Then, with a nobility and a forgetfulness of self in such a moment that won my heart entirely—"Very well, sir," said he. "The game is yours. But this gentleman, at least—I have but met him by chance—you'll not wish to embroil him with me."

The fellow shrugged his massive shoulders. "As for him, why let him go his ways and be hanged." He stood away from the door. "There, sir," said he.

"Not I," I answered, my resolve taken not to abandon this poor prince who had ever had my heart, thankful that at last and in his need I should have this chance of serving him. "This gentleman comes with me, and——"

"Chut!" he interrupted angrily, and set his pistol on a level with my breast. "If ye're for turning troublesome, young sir, your account is soon settled. D'ye dream I'll let you come between me and a thousand guineas?"

"Leave me, sir, I beg," put in the Prince.

Digitized by Google

"You can not help me. Here is a mercenary villain in quest of blood-money. What arguments do you suppose could prevail with such a knave?"

The answer to that question flashed at once into my mind. In a belt about my waist I had two hundred guineas—the fruits of my dealings at Keswick, the price of the horses I had sold.

"The argument of gold," I answered, and under the Prince's astonished eyes I turned to the spy. "Look you, sir, what is your price?"

"My price?" He blew out his cheeks and laughed. "Say his price, rather—and that's a thousand guineas."

I shook my head. "Too much, my friend. Allow his Royal Highness to depart in peace, forego your pursuit of him, and you shall have two hundred guineas here and now."

He looked surprised at first; then laughed contemptuously. But the Prince caught me by the arm.

"No, no, sir!" he exclaimed. "I could not—I will not permit it!"

"Sir," I answered, very deferential, "you shall. Indeed, it is scarce your right to refuse the service of a loyal subject, who so far has done naught but talk to show his devotion to your cause. To others it has been given to fight your battles with steel. I would I might have been one of those, but since I was not, grant me at least the honor now of fighting this with gold."

"Sir, it is very noble in you—" he was beginning, when the other broke in again.

"Not noble enough by many a hundred pounds if he's to carry the victory," he sneered.

I turned to him with arguments based upon the philosophy that a bird in the hand is worth several in the bush, and urged him to accept my offer, since it amounted to all the money that I had upon me.

"What security have you that the Government will pay you the reward?" I asked him. "I have never heard it urged that it is an over-honest Government; nor sir, with all respect," I added, sardonically, "d'ye look a man with a clean conscience, to whom the Government might show a becoming deference." I saw him wince, and I pursued the argument. "What, for instance, if the Government, reluctant to part with its money, were to set up an inquiry into your ways of life, and were to find in them a pretext on which to jail you and so save its guineas? What then, my friend?" I taunted him, perceiving that my thrust had gone home. "Bethink you of the risk you run; consider the certainty I am offering you. Which is it to be?"

He hesitated a moment, considering me with a gloomy eye. "'Tis not," said he presently, "that I am moved by your talk but that neither do I, myself, desire the Prince's death. It is just that I am a poor man, else would I not be at the task in which ye find me. Pay me five hundred guineas and his Highness shall go free; more—I'll even help him make good his escape. I swear it."

"I have but two hundred guineas on me. But stay! You shall have these now, and another three hundred when you bring me word to Coldbarrow that his Highness is safe."

He pondered my proposal; then leered, and shook his head. "Ay," he growled, "and set a trap to catch me when I come! Nay, nay. I'm not to be taken in that gin!"

"Bethink you," I returned impatiently. "'Tis I shall be in your power. You have but to inform against me if I fail you." I unbuttoned my waistcoat, unbuckled the heavy belt, and dropped it on the table with a resounding clink. "There!" said I. "Will the Government prove as prompt a paymaster, think you?"

But in that moment another sound beside the chink of gold had caught his ear, and he stood in a listening attitude, a strange, startled look upon his evil face.

"What's that?" he snapped, almost under his breath. "Hoofs!" He leaped to the window-seat, flung up the window, and thrust out his dirty head. The Prince, standing beside me, looked alarmed and uneasy, as well he might. And if it crossed his mind to profit by the ruffian's attention being momentarily engaged elsewhere, he must have dismissed the thought as unavailing until he knew what fresh peril was approaching. To make a dash for the open now might be to fall into a worse plight than the present one.

"A posse of sheriff's men!" cried the ruffian, turning.

"In Heaven's name, then, resolve yourself!" I besought him. "Take this belt, and come to me at Coldbarrow for the rest, as I have said."

He cogitated me a moment, what time the

Digitized by Google

hoofs came rapidly nearer. "Come, man," I cried, "there is need for haste!"

He advanced slowly—with a maddening slowness. "Very well," he said. "I'll trust ye, Mr. Dayne." He took up the belt and buckled it about his waist under his ragged coat.

The Prince turned to me, holding out his hands, thanking me and blessing me, and overwhelming me with his graciousness. Perforce I had to cut him short. I turned again to the other.

"Remember," I said, "it is a part of our bargain that ye help his Highness to safety."

He nodded. "Ye may trust me. A bargain is a bargain, and ye'll not find me fail in my part on't. Quick!" he cried to the Prince, very brisk now in his manner. "They are almost here." He plucked a second pistol from his pocket, and thrust it into my hand. "Secure the landlord," he bade me. "See that he doesn't blab; that he denies having had other guests than yourself. Come, sir," he resumed to the Prince. "Our way lies by the back. I shall need a horse——"

"Take mine," I cried in a frenzy. "Bestir! Bestir! Leave Borrowdaile behind you with all speed."

He opened the door, and held it for his Highness. The Prince turned to me again to recommence his thanks, perhaps to protest. I thrust him unceremoniously forward. "Away, sir," I bade him, "or we are all lost!"

And so, at last, they went. I heard their feet go pattering down the passage; I heard a door open and close, just as the landlord, coming out of the room opposite, would have inquired into the unusual manner of their departure. He knew me well, and entertained friendly feelings toward me, and in half a dozen sentences he was won over to my side.

THEN in a cloud of dust and with a thunder of hoofs, the sheriff's posse swept up to the door of the inn, and shouted for old Blossom. He would have gone at once in answer to their call, but I detained him. Every moment was of value now, as every moment increased the start which the Prince had got, and his chances of winning through to safety. In vain did Blossom remind me that it was not good to keep the sheriff waiting; in vain did he implore me to let him go in answer to their impatient calling. I kept him where he was, and let them shout themselves into a rage. I even went the length of threatening to shoot him if he disobeyed me. Thus were some precious minutes gained—enough at least for the purpose which I sought to serve. Then the door was flung open, and the sheriff himself, in a very fury of impatience, stood on the threshold.

"Why, what a devil's here?" he cried, very red of face, very angry of eye. "Why am I kept waiting when I call?"

I came to the landlord's rescue, and myself answered my uncle with the truth. "'Tis my doing sir. 'Twas I detained him."

"You?" he thundered at me. "And to what end, pray?"

"Why, if you must know, sir," I answered boldly, in a burst of loyalty to the Prince, whom at last I had had the honor of serving, "to the end that his Royal Highness might get safely away!"

"His Royal Highness?" he echoed, like a man dumfounded. Then his brow cleared, and his eyes flashed between mockery and anger. "So!" he cried. "Then he was here!"

The landlord flung himself forward in a panic. "Sir James," he cried, "I swear I never knew him for the Prince, else I had never harbored him!"

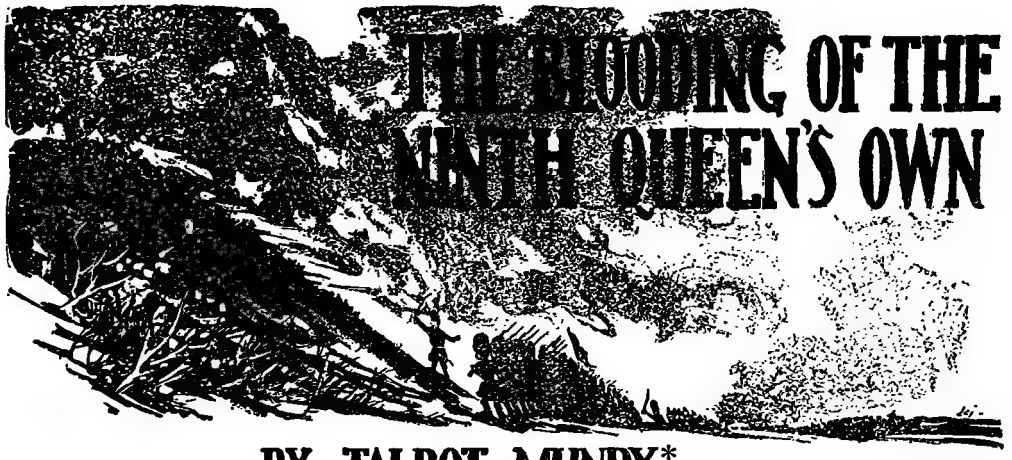
"The Prince!" echoed my uncle, with a short, angry laugh. "Gad a' mercy, fool, 'twas no prince—'twas Mike Coleman, Captain Coleman of the hightoby. 'Tis a fair trade he has been driving with silly Jacobites by his likeness to the Pretender; ye're not the first gull he's bubblied with his gooseberry eyes and yellow wig. His Royal Highness, forsooth! Pah!" He shrivelled me with the scorn of his glance. "What draft, now, may he have made upon your purse, sweet nephew? He and his fellow-rogue, Tom Londsay?"

If I looked as foolish as I felt, I must have looked very foolish.

"'Tis no matter for that," I answered glumly, dissembling my loss that I might avoid still keener gibes from him. "They'll be away by now, I fear."

He looked at me with undisguised contempt. "Ay, they'll have a deal to thank you for! Get you to Coldbarrow, nephew, to mind the farm, and give thanks that ye've an uncle for sheriff, or it might go hard with you for this. Ay, and leave politics to shrewder heads."

Digitized by Google



THE BLOODING OF THE NINTH QUEEN'S OWN

BY TALBOT MUNDY*

THE officer commanding the Ninth Queen's Own Regiment was known to everybody except his own men as Colonel Payne. His men called him "Mother." He knew that, of course, for a man who has a nickname bestowed on him is bound to overhear it at some time or another; but if the truth is to be told he rather liked it.

If he had guessed that a certain meed of good-natured contempt had helped the rank and file to choose his nickname he would have been right; perhaps he knew it. But at least it proved that the men appreciated the loving care that he squandered on the regiment.

The other officers, who had come for the most part from other regiments and had ideas of their own on the coddling of fighting men, rather chafed under it; most officers refer to their colonel as the "old man"; they referred privately to Colonel Payne as the "old woman," a term including all the men's contempt without any of the genuine regard which the nickname "Mother" implied.

But common soldiers were treated rather worse than convicted felons, as a rule, in those days, so the rank and file of the Ninth Queen's Own considered themselves singularly fortunate in having a Colonel who troubled himself about them off parade. They were disposed to accept with a good grace all the coddling that would come their way and they repaid his kindness with a devotion that they spared their other officers. If they called him "Mother" and laughed at his protruding stomach, they loved him.

He remembered what the other officers of the regiment occasionally forgot—that the Ninth Queen's Own were not considered fighting men. In the whole history of the regiment they had not once been on active service. They had been christened the Queen's Own for services rendered, it is true, but the services were not of a kind to fill a throbbing page of history.

When a German princeling had succeeded to the throne of England, they had marched to the London docks to meet his German Consort and had escorted her with all pomp and circumstance to Buckingham Palace. She had been vastly taken with their crimson uniforms, the precision of their drill and the courtesy of their commanding officer and had begged a distinction for them; so blue facings were added to their crimson tunics and their title was changed from the Ninth Foot to the Ninth Queen's Own Light Infantry. After that, prettier and more plastered up with pipe-clay and better drilled than ever, the regiment had settled down to a life of ease and luxury, mounting palace guards and performing other unwarlike duties.

But the Queen Consort lost favor with her lord and master, and with her declining influence, the glory of her particular regiment faded too. She retired into virtual seclusion and the Queen's Own went back to its depot in Lancashire to rust and be forgotten, while regiments with a fighting record were sent for to take its place.

*See page 190

Digitized by Google

King succeeded king and colonel succeeded colonel; but a regiment never dies. The Ninth Queen's Own lived on in Lancashire, recruiting broad-shouldered, sturdy little men amid the clanging looms and grimy collieries, drilling them, keeping them for five-and-twenty years and turning them adrift again to starve in due conformity with the written law of England.

Officers purchased their commissions in those days and, provided, of course, that there were vacancies, they had the purchaser's choice of regiments. As England is never out of war for more than thirty years or so, it became the fashion for officers who had no stomach for fighting to exchange into the Ninth; it had come to be regarded as a regiment of non-combatants, very suitable for officers of slender means and those whose wives and children caused them to look askance at the risks of war.

The County society was passable and the uniform was smart and becoming. It was a fine position for a gentleman of moderate means to hold a commission in the Ninth. So the regiment was never short of officers of a certain sort and, recruiting as it did amid the fluctuating ebb and flow of Lancashire prosperity, it was never short of men.

They flocked to the colors when trade was bad and when trade revived they had to stay with the colors, for there was no escaping from the twenty-five years' contract that they had made with their country. Once with the colors, they had to stay with them until their time was up.

BUT their colors meant nothing to that regiment. Men will fight to the death for a flag that has the names of battles on it; but the colors of the Ninth were blank. They were very pretty —crimson and gold and blue—and they had been presented to them by the Queen Consort whose name they bore; but they stood for no tradition of hard-won victory; nobody had ever rallied round them on a stricken field; they were baubles that looked pretty on parade, like the men's uniforms.

But the day came when England joined hands with her ancient enemy, France, and set out to humble the Czar of Russia. Regiment after regiment was sent to the Crimea to starve and freeze and rot and waste away to nothing before the ravages of disease and battle, until the whole of England's standing army, save only the Ninth Queen's Own was at the seat of war. Then somebody remembered the Ninth and they too were torn from a weeping depot and shipped over-sea as food for powder. It was thought a dark day for Merrie England when only the Ninth Queen's Own was left to send.

It was a grilling day in Summer when they landed on the shore of the Black Sea. The Alma and Inkerman and the Charge of Balaklava were already history, and they marched for the whole of a weary day past a trail of broken wagons and horses' skeletons and long six-foot trenches where the French and English dead lay buried.

They landed—Colonel and brand-new colors, bugles and bright uniforms—with accepted theories on the pomp and circumstance of war, and they saw war with the curtain raised and the horrors untoned-down by distance.

Most of the other regiments at the front had started square; they had landed on green fields and clean, rolling hill and valley; the country-side had grown into a shambles gradually and they had grown used to it in the process. But the Ninth marched straight into the shambles and, all green as they were, saw the last act first, and smelt it. From the Colonel downward they were out of love with war when they reached the camp before Sebastopol.

The General to whose brigade they were assigned inspected them the moment they arrived. He was a hard-bitten, level-headed veteran, who knew how to read the hearts of men and handle them and send them cheering in front of him to certain death; so he read the condition of the Ninth in half a minute. There was no mistaking the meaning of the white faces that were lined up in two long ranks in front of him; he determined to split up the men of this new regiment before sending them into the firing-line; he would draft them by half companies to other regiments and let them face the enemy with experienced men on either side of them. Then, when they were broken in, he could reassemble them and use them together as a fighting unit.

But war is war and an enemy with his back to the wall has no consideration for the feelings of green regiments or the intentions of Generals of brigade. The Russians were beleaguered in Sebastopol, but not surrounded. They were besieged on two sides at once, but their rear was open and they

Digitized by Google

would come out when they wished and fight in the open when it pleased them. And the Russian General was a man who was very pleased to fight whenever the occasion offered, but particularly when the enemy least expected it.

On the night of the Ninth's arrival, before there was time to divide them by half-companies among the other regiments, the Russians moved out of Sebastopol in force and occupied a long, ragged hill that overlooked both the French and the English camps.

When morning broke, their guns could be seen in position on the hill-top, and long gray-clad lines of infantry were drawn up in readiness to hold the point of vantage they had seized. Their guns were in range of both camps and for the first time in the history of the campaign, the French and English Generals were at one in their opinion. The Russians must be driven from that hill at any cost and without delay.

The French agreed to work round to the north side while the British artillery engaged the Russians from the south; then, when the French were in position, and at a given signal, there was to be a combined attack from both sides at once.

So the Ninth Queen's Own found themselves drawn up for battle within forty-eight hours of their arrival at the front.

THEY were posted on the left wing and held in reserve; though stationed a little in front of the brigade, there were two low hills between which they could shelter until they were wanted and where they could neither see the Russians nor be seen by them.

For twelve long hours the Queen's Own lay there and wondered what was happening, while shell and shrapnel shrieked and moaned and burst overhead and musketry rattled and volleyed on every side of them. They were at least getting accustomed to the noise of battle.

Of all the regiment, only Colonel Payne could see what was going on. He lay prone on the top of the lowest of the two small hills and what he saw appalled him. He watched his own brigade more than he watched the Russians, and the brigade's maneuvers resembled the writhing and twisting of a tortured animal. For the Russians had the range and the brigade had to wait and endure their cannonade so that the French might have time to march into position on the far side.

The British artillery replied with interest, but then, even less than now, could guns be left to their own devices in the open. Infantry were needed to protect them from the fire of infantry and to guard them against surprise, so for twelve long hours the shattered remnants of seven regiments that had fought at Inkerman writhed and squirmed under the hail of ordnance.

Unlike the Ninth Queen's Own, who were newly landed, these regiments were worn by disease and hunger; they were skilled in the art of compaigning and steady from long experience under fire, but disease and hunger had left their unfailing mark.

Men who had stormed the heights of Inkerman in the cold gray morning, and were later to win immortal fame storming the Great Redan, were growing sulky and disheartened under a fire that they had to endure standing. At first their officers were hard put to it to hold them back; they wanted to rush through the zone of fire and storm the Russian position without waiting for the French. Then, under the awful punishment, they grew disheartened. When the time came for the combined attack and the bugles rang out for a general advance there were none to obey. The whole line stood still and hesitated and the officers got behind their men to stop them from stampeding.

Then Colonel Payne saw that his hour for action had arrived and he stood up where he had been lying on the hill-top. The men of a seasoned regiment would have stayed as they were, huddled between the hills, and waited for the word of command, but when a wounded officer reeled through the drifting smoke, reined up his panting charger and handed a crumpled piece of paper to the Colonel, they rose like one man, took their dressing by the right and came to attention.

"Your orders, sir!" said the galloper; then he sat on his horse and watched the movements of the inexperienced men with an expression on his face that was half contemptuous.

The Colonel read the despatch, slipped it in his pocket and nodded. He was right. His hour had come. He saw that his men were standing, lined up already in close order waiting for him, company by company, officers in front and sergeants behind, and his mind was made up on the instant.

He thought that the men who called him "Mother" would maybe follow him. The

Digitized by Google

regiment was to be blooded at last and he would blood them to some purpose. All he had to do was to keep command of himself; if he flinched the men would flinch; if he marched forward bravely the men would march bravely behind him and there would be the name of a battle emblazoned on those virgin colors before the next campaign.

"Fix—bayonets!" he ordered.

Green they might be, but they had learned their drill. They fixed their wicked, gleaming, triangular-shaped spikes with a mechanical precision that would have put any modern regiment, in any country in the world, to shame; two or three years spent in learning manual drill were not considered wasted in the days when men were enlisted for twenty-five years' service.

"Slope—Arms! Move to the right in fours! Form—Fours! Right—Turn! By the left—Quick—March!"

With the steady tramp of well-drilled men the Ninth Queen's Own marched out from the shelter of the two hills, colors flying and their crimson tunics and burnished buttons glittering in the sun—like a regiment going on parade.

NOT one of them, except the Colonel, had seen a man killed yet. They had heard the shrapnel moaning and screaming for half a day and had grown used to it; but they were as green as on the day they landed in everything but that.

"I suppose it's all in the day's work," muttered the galloper who watched them, "but it looks like a shame!" Then he turned and looked again at the brigade that he had left, or rather, at the sulky, shattered half of it that remained.

The men were still refusing to advance. The roar and thunder of the French attack could be heard plainly above the din of musketry, and their officers were urging them to charge. As he watched them, one regiment broke into a half-hearted cheer and advanced at the double—slowed into a walk—halted one by one—looked round to see who followed them—turned round and ran, leaving their officers to face the music alone, but taking their colors with them.

Colonel Payne saw that. He saw it as his regiment filed out in column of fours on to the plain. If his men saw it, he feared they would run, too, for they were out alone now, three hundred yards or more in front of the brigade and headed in two long, thin columns for the Russian position. He did all he could to prevent them from looking round, nagging at them for marching carelessly and making the sergeants nag them.

He kept them so busy keeping their dressing between fours that they had no time to think of anything else. For the same reason he postponed altering his formation until the last possible minute; in fours they would look ahead of them, in company formation they would glance from right to left to keep their dressing; and a man who glances from right to left can often see what is happening behind him.

When his own courage failed him, he recalled his written orders word by word and thought of the honor that would be the regiment's if he could only hold his men together. He knew as well as the General who had written them and the galloper who had brought them that this was work for an army of veterans. There was not much skill needed—only nerve and unflinching courage, two qualities that a green regiment might be expected to lack.

"Advance," the Brigadier had written, "if you can get your men to do it. The whole brigade is utterly demoralized and I shall have to retire before I can pull the men together again. The retreat is likely to become a rout unless you can cover it, so advance as far as possible, engage the enemy and hold them in check as long as you can. Then fall back on the brigade. But remember, if your men break and run, the situation will be worse than ever, so hold their noses up to the enemy until the last possible minute and when you do retire, retire in good order."

It was rough on Colonel Payne, all things considered, for he knew and understood. It was obvious to him that his regiment was being sacrificed to save the rest, and for a man who has never in his life been under fire, it is no light ordeal to lead eight hundred other men on what is plainly a forlorn hope.

So, although he seemed to be marching very bravely at the head of his regiment, it was really a very sick and sorry little Colonel—that straight-backed, fatherly-looking, gray-haired little man, who strutted pompously and never once dared look behind him. He was afraid that if he did look behind him, his men would flinch.

Each time a shell shrieked overhead, he

Digitized by Google

thought of his wife and children, certain in his own mind that he would never see them again. Each time he brought his mind back to the regiment with an effort.

The Russian gunners had been practising on the brigade all day and had got the range effectually. Those were the days of smooth bores and high trajectories and as the Ninth Queen's Own advanced, the shell and shrapnel described a high arc over their heads and left them untouched. As yet, they were out of range of musket-fire.

Over to the right, the Russian infantry had been pushed forward and were working their way round to enfilade the British; but the French attack on the far side kept most of the Russians busy and the advancing infantry were not strong enough to dare a struggle at close quarters. They were waiting for the artillery to advance the demoralization of the British brigade another stage before rushing in to finish matters.

BEFORE anybody in the Russian army realized that a British regiment, alone and unsupported, was advancing to the attack, the Ninth Queen's Own was already half-way across the intervening space—marching at the slope, keeping perfect step and unmolested.

Then four regiments of infantry deployed into line and moved down the hill to attend to it and a battery of artillery tried hastily to find the range. But haste was not conducive to range-finding in the days when muzzle-loading cannon used to jump back a yard or so each time that they were fired. Most of the shells continued screaming overhead.

Then one gunner got the range by accident and a dropping shell cut a swath corner-wise through the ranks of the left-hand column, felling nine men. The Russian infantry, still advancing, opened fire at about eight hundred yards. That was long-range work for those days, but it seemed to Colonel Payne that they meant coming closer. They were moving down the hill toward him, rushing forward, then halting to fire, then rushing forward again. Here was his place to stand, if he meant to cover the retreat of the brigade.

"By companies on number one!" he roared. "Front, form!"

The two columns swung round into one long, double line of red, colors flying in the middle; but as they swung round he saw that every single man took one good look behind him and he knew then that the regiment saw what had happened.

He decided on the instant to advance again. If he halted where he was, he felt certain they would fade away and run before the advancing Russians; advancing, he might hold them together a while yet, but he had no more faith in them than a nervous rider has in his horse.

"Forward, the Queen's Own!" he ordered, stepping out bravely in front of them; and they advanced with a ready swing all together that took him rather by surprise. He began to feel better with that solid *tramp—tramp—tramp* behind him.

Then some one blew the charge. He gave no orders for it, but a corporal snatched the bugle away from a company bugler and blew it with all his might. He glanced round angrily and saw that the whole regiment was grinning. A yell went up that shook the ground in front of him, bayonets came down to the charge without a word from any one and he found himself running for his life with a hedge of glistening bayonets behind him.

The Russian infantry opened fire now in real earnest and a volley swept through the ranks of the Ninth and left a dozen gaps in its wake.

"Close in on the center!" roared somebody—certainly not the Colonel.

"Forward, the Queen's Own!" roared a color-sergeant.

"Hurrah!" roared the men and "*R-r-i-p,*" went a volley through the middle of them and "Rah! Hurrah!" they answered, as they swung forward and closed in to fill up gaps and charged like a regiment of devils.

They were right on the Russians now—at the foot of the hill, starting to charge up it, and volley after volley came smashing into them.

"Forward, the Queen's Own!" roared the color-sergeant again; "Come on, six of you, fend for Mother!"

Six of them, three on either hand, guarded him with a moving hedge of bayonets and the color-sergeant, with one arm pushing him behind but with his sword-arm free, helped him forward up the hill.

Then they met the Russians with a crash and a cheer and the sickening sound of steel on steel; and still they went forward, their colors bobbing and swaying on the hill-side,

Digitized by Google

as they fought their way up it, closing in always on the center to fill up gaps.

A Russian officer picked out Colonel Payne and engaged him. Swordsmanship was far from being the Colonel's strong point and the Russian made a pass or two and had his measure; then he swung for him with the old seventh cut, that is safe to use on a beginner. It cuts a man from skull to chin-bone. But one of Mother's inner-guard took the cut on the locking-ring of his bayonet and the color-sergeant's sword licked out past the Colonel's ear and split the Russian as a cook's knife splits a herring—lengthwise.

"Forward, the Queen's Own!" roared the color-sergeant.

THE Russians were eight or nine to one against them and had the hill in their favor. Weight was bound to tell in the end; but the Ninth closed in on the center again and pushed forward. They were at it with the butt now, swinging it round their heads and bringing it down with a crash that broke through guard and forearm and skull of the man in front of it.

The Lancashireman prefers the butt at close quarters, just as he prefers to use his feet before his fist. These green, unseasoned soldiers had forgotten most of their drill now; they were fighting in the way that came natural, and the Russians retired doggedly, but steadily, in front of them.

"Room in front, sir!" the color-sergeant yelled, lunging forward and skewering a Russian officer; then he pushed his Colonel into the gap he had made and the three soldiers on either side of him kicked and thrust and hacked until they were abreast of him again and their bayonets once more protected him from harm.

Not a shot was being fired on either side; they were at too close quarters and there was no time to load. It was shove and thrust and hack, crashing butts and flickering sword-thrusts and above all, the cheers of the Ninth Queen's Own and the thunder of the ordnance that still pounded the brigade in their rear.

Nobody noticed that the colors were missing. The subaltern who carried them lay dead a hundred yards back down the hill and the colors lay underneath his body. They had forgotten all about them. They closed in on their Colonel, the little man that had petted them and spoilt them at the depot at home; he did mean something to them; they fought for him and rallied round him and guarded him as though he were holier than all the regimental colors in history.

"Get in front of him, you six!" roared the color-sergeant. They were not the same six, for four of them lay dying on the hillside, but others had replaced them on the instant and never for a minute were there less than three on either hand to parry every blow that was aimed at him. They obeyed the color-sergeant without question and presently the Colonel found a living wedge in front of him—a wedge that fought and swore and struggled and forced a passage for him up the hill and through the Russian ranks.

"Come on, four more of you!" roared the color-sergeant. "Up with him; lift him up; up the hill with him!"

Four sturdy little privates seized him on the word and hoisted him above their shoulders. The Colonel kicked and swore and ordered them to let him down again; but they held him tight. Then he missed the colors.

"The colors!" he screamed. "Where are the colors?"

"Dom the colors!" answered one of them. "Keep still, thee owd fool, or thy Missus 'll never see thee back hoam again!" And the four of them grabbed him in a united grip that made him keep still whether he wanted to or not.

Then he screwed his head round and looked behind him and, where the brigade had been, was nothing. The brigade was half-way to the hill, racing in a long, red line. The sight of a green regiment showing them the way had been too much for even beaten men. They were coming on in silence—the most awful thing there is, an army bent on wiping out disgrace.

They kept no guard over their Colonels, but their colors were protected by the steadiest and best men they had, as they swept on and up the hill in front of them, silent as the sword of death.

"They're coming!" shouted the Colonel. "The brigade's coming! Forward, the Queen's Own!"

"They're cooming! The cowards are cooming!" roared the color-sergeant. "Forward, lads! Forward, the Queen's Own! Show 'em the way, lads!"

Then the roar of the French attack

Digitized by Google

sounded plainer and Russian bugles blared above the turmoil. Suddenly the ranks in front of them broke and ran, for the French had stormed the hill behind them and the Russians were between two foes.

When they reached the top, the Frenchmen drove them down again, to perish on the bayonets of the on-coming brigade. A few laid down their arms, but most of them died on the hill-side. One-third of the Russian force that had occupied the hill broke away toward Sebastopol, leaving their guns behind them and, since neither French nor English had any cavalry to pursue them, they made good their retreat.

COLONEL PAYNE was on the hill-top before he knew it, surrounded by the shouting, cheering remnants of his regiment. They set him on his feet beside a Russian cannon and he sat down on the trunnion of it, bewildered and half-fainting.

"You dogs!" he mumbled; "you damned, good-for-nothing darlings! God! I'm proud of you!"

He dropped his sword and held his head between his two hands to keep it from going round. The color-sergeant seized the sword immediately. He was bleeding from a ghastly-looking wound in his left arm and he wet the sword-blade in the blood that flowed from it. Then he held it out in front of him, hilt first.

"Your sword, sir; you dropped it!"

The Colonel looked up and took it. Then he saw the blood on it and looked at it, half-puzzled.

"You got him finely, sir," said the color-sergeant respectfully.

But the Colonel still looked puzzled.

"Aye," said a private standing by, nudging the man next to him. "I seed un too! Cut uns yead oppen an' killed un dead, he did!"

In less than a minute the Colonel remembered what had never happened and believed that he had killed a man; and his regiment would have rather witnessed the feeling of pride it brought him than have received an increase of pay. It was all he could do to stop them from hoisting him shoulder-high again.

Then, suddenly, he remembered the colors, and a dozen men were sent running down the hill to look for them. They found them where they had fallen and brought them up the hill quite casually and clearly caring nothing for them; but when the General commanding the brigade reached the hill-top their colors were in their midst where they ought to be and the incident passed unnoticed amid the thousand and one incidents of that memorable day.

Colonel Payne received a medal for that day's work and "Mother's medal" meant more to his regiment than even the word "Sebastopol" that was in due course emblazoned on their erstwhile virgin colors. But he retired when the war was over. The men who went home with him were barely sufficient to form a nucleus for fresh recruits, and when a year or two had passed Mother was little more than a legend.

That regiment has the names of so many battles on its colors to-day that they have had to add streamers that hang down on either side to take the overflow of names—each one a record of gallantry in action.

But that one name "Sebastopol" is the one that is shown most reverently and taught most carefully to newly-joined recruits. They are taught to remember the day when the Ninth Queen's Own were green, and how they stormed a hillside single-handed and made a whipped brigade come back again.

If the day ever does come when the Ninth Queen's Own are found to flinch in the presence of an enemy, human nature will have so changed that tradition has no more value in training recruits, and men will no longer fight for the undying glory of their regiment. Until it does come, the Ninth are likely to be a pretty useful sort of stiffening to any army.

Digitized by Google

CARNEY'S CLAIM

BY MARY MARKWELL & MADGE MACBETH

CARNEY was the most useless man I ever knew.

How he got into the Northwest Mounted Police puzzled most people, but why he was kept there, no one could ever make out, for he not only indulged in every weakness known to barrack life, but committed uncounted follies out of it.

Carney was a drunkard; his word would not be taken on oath; he stole things from his comrades; he broke barracks; neglected and shirked duty (the fines for such lapses always eating up his pay in advance) and, being already on the lowest rung of the military ladder, there was no possibility of reducing him further.

He was a despicable little cad, who—— Stay! Carney had one good quality; he never forgot a kindness! It is quite true that the balance of accounts was always on the wrong side. But he squared his indebtedness with promises—such glorious promises, too! Milikins (who paid Carney's fines when they began to mount up) was to receive a horse, when the Constable's band was rounded up. Dodsley was already a sharer in some South African mines, which he used to tell us, with a wink, he would not part with on any account. Jarges, whom Carney hated tremendously, was promised a beautiful funeral, and that when the first opportunity offered.

Perhaps the only pure thing about Carney was his brogue; that was always true and honest and he wasn't ashamed of it either, like some people I could name He also had a great and splendid love for his country, which may account for my liking the boastful, lying little beggar who slept next to me in barracks and wouldn't let me rest at night for listening to his visionary yarns. They always ran in this fashion:

"Arrah! Whin Oi was in the Sowdan and a Liftinint in the A-rr-my——" Or, "Once, I recollect, whin Oi was in Injee and Major av the Fourt' Artiller-r-r-y——" until a shower of boots, spurs and other impedimenta would come tumbling about his ears, to my imminent danger.

You couldn't name a place on any continent that Carney had not lived in, occupying some position of trust or importance. So when the discovery of the Yukon goldfields and the consequent excitement became the topic of barrack conversation, the man who knew all about it was Carney.

Reports of lawlessness from that wonderful country made necessary the presence of the "Riders of the Plains," and Carney, who hated straight duty, was wild with hope of belonging to the lucky division that would be sent. He insisted that his knowledge of the North Country would make his services invaluable.

"For," said he, "sure 'twas there me and

Digitized by Google

another man—I disremember his name now—staked out a foine claim. Och, be the powers, it was great! Why didn't Oi shtay wid it? Because me health was bad; me eye-soight was actually impaired wid the gleam av the goold and, between you and me, byes, the other man wanted to lave the place to see a bit av loife, now that he had a pile, so, to oblige a comrade—he was me fri'nd, you know—I lift wid him, bad luck to the day!"

This was the one dream the boys loved to hear and they considered it immense fun to make Carney draw maps showing them the lay of the land, the positions of mountain ranges and fertile valleys, marking off with a dirty thumb-nail creeks—where, "begob, the wather's yaller as ochre wid goold and where, moind Oi'm tellin' ye no loi, now, Oi could take ye to a place, where, by diggin' no deeper than for to bury a cat, sure, ye could take out the nuggets—och, the nuggets as big as yer wad, in shovelfuls!"

BY AN odd chance, it was indeed Carney's division, under Belford, which was ordered to the Yukon. The poor fellow realized that his Superintendent wanted to shake him before going and his efforts to walk a chalk-line, pending the start, succeeded so far as to make his commanding officer remark:

"That fellow Carney is up to some villainy, I know. For he never behaves himself two days in succession unless he means some new devilment!"

His popularity was not materially increased.

Just as I was about to leave with the Division I received the startling intelligence that, by the death of an uncle, I had inherited sufficient money to make me abundantly comfortable for the rest of my life, so instead of going to the Yukon in the interests of the Government, I decided to purchase my discharge and go independently. The necessity for earning my living gone, perversely, a strange thirst to make money arose within me. I wanted to go there and dig for it!

Carney's groan when he heard of my intention was terrible to hear. His reproachful looks made me feel unkind toward the uncle who had selected me as a most unworthy heir to his wealth and it was with something akin to embarrassment that I listened to Carney's wail.

"Bradley, now tell me, loike a man, wasn't Oi always a fri'nd to ye whin ye needed wan?"

For the life of me I could not recollect any time when he had ever come to my assistance, but I nodded darkly.

"Shure we understand aich other, man. And Oi'm tellin' ye that the day ye lave the Force, Oi lave too, that Oi will!"

I tried to remember that this fellow had never lied to me or about me—to any unpardonable extent—that he had made me several presents (which had mysteriously disappeared later) and my Irish heart was touched. I argued with him.

But day after day he asked hopelessly: "What the divil am Oi goin' to do widout ye? Do ye think Oi'd go up there again wid a pack av blackgyards loike those byes?" Then embroidering his query with several oaths, he would declare, "Oi'll ate me shir-r-t fir-r-st!"

This inconsequential threat was followed by a peculiar glance and I began to suspect that Carney was hatching some mad scheme, for which I felt unaccountably responsible. Sounding him carefully and cautiously, my suspicions were confirmed.

"Oi'll not say anny thing," he muttered, "but Oi'll play me own game, whin ye're gone from here, Oi will. Och, there's only wan man who knows what that means, too, and he's dead, so help me! But Oi'm a man av me wur'rud, Oi am!"

Next morning I approached Carney. He was in the stable, venting all his ill-will on the horses, who were taking no mean part in the fray. Calling to him I led the way to the open prairie. "How would you like to leave the Force, Carney?" I asked.

"Loike wan would loike to lave Hades!" was the ungracious answer. "And 'tis as onloikely gettin' away from wan place as the other!"

"Well, perhaps not," I said. "Suppose I had purchased your discharge——"

There was a wild whoop of delight and I found myself smothered against a tobacco-reeking bosom with Carney's salt tears flowing over me.

"Yerra! God bless ye!" he cried. "Shure Oi know whin ye say the wur-rud it's aqual to another man's oath—loike me, mesilf! And Oi'll tell ye something Oi wasn't for tellin' anny man aloive, no more was Oi! 'Tis only wan other that knows it and he—God rest his sowl in p'ace—he's dead. It's

Digitized by Google

about a place out there by a shmall river, between two big hills and och, man, the bullets av goold, they're as big as that"—— measuring a half of his thumb—"and as broad as a banana! Oi'll show you the shpot, Oi will; it's beside a shmall river, as Oi was sayin', forinst two hills—Oi disremember the name av that river, now, but no matter, maybe it's got no name," he added quickly, seeing me smile, "but upon me wur-rud as a gintleman, Bradley, it's the truth Oi'm tellin' ye, there's goold there—begor, diggin' a grave for a flea would fetch it up in bucketfuls!"

"All right, old fellow," I said. "I've purchased your discharge; not for the gold, but to try to help you make a man of yourself. Do you understand?"

Carney wrung my hand silently, much overcome, but later I overheard him telling Milikins,

"Shure that bally fool, Bradley, was for *makin'* me lave the Force, whither Oi would or no! Ye know Oi come in for a bit av property mesilf and he'll give me no aise nor p'ace until I invest me money in a trip wid him out to the Yukon. Shure he knows Oi'm the man to be havin' along of that country—me as knows it loike the Bible!"

WE STARTED out with the N. W. M. P. party, although independent of them. Carney, a self-appointed guide from the first, drew upon himself the positive hatred of every man in the crowd. He was always breaking in upon our plans and arrangements, telling how he had gone over the same country with the Earl of This or the Duke of That, and that our way was not the right way. Jarges, never particular in the choice of language, would commence a quarrel and things would be uncomfortable all the rest of the day.

Talk about hardships! Try the highway to the Yukon gold-fields if you want to know what hardship is! Every man his own beast of burden; impossible trails over impassable mountains; muck to your knees and water to your chin; snow, hail, rain, frost and dew; cold such as you never felt before, or heat the like of which you hope never to feel again! Within a dozen days of the end of the journey Carney was attacked by the fever. He did not get up for breakfast, but as that was not a new thing, we thought nothing of it.

When it was time to start and he had still not made an appearance Jarges pulled the tent down over his head. Carney looked up but said nothing. When I went to him I found him really ill, a fact which the boys doubted, declaring that he only wanted some one to carry his pack. He struggled to walk but failed, so, feeling responsible for his presence with the party, I urged the rest to go on and leave me to look after the sick man. This, they did, with many expressions of pity for my softness in spoiling my trip for a beast like Carney.

He grew suddenly worse that night, breaking out into wild ravings and telling the truth for the first time in his life, because he did not know what he was saying! There was not much that could be done for him, but at least I sat beside him and watched for the break of the fever. Three weeks of illness passed.

When the fever left, his strength seemed to go with it and I found him worse, though there was recognition in his sunken eyes when I bid him good morning.

"You're better, old fellow?" I asked, knowing the contrary.

"Was—I—sick?" was the weak reply. Then, seeming to remember, he whispered, "The byes?"

"They've gone on," I told him, "and we're to follow as soon as you are able. We are almost there, you know."

"We *are* there!" was the positive answer. "I didn't want—Jarges—to—know," Carney whispered with a cunning look.

"Why didn't ye go along wid them?" he asked after swallowing some of the brandy I held to his lips.

"You didn't suppose I would desert a fellow just because he got a touch of the fever, did you?" I counter-questioned.

"They lift me!" he muttered over and over again, tears streaming down his wan cheeks. "They would have lift me alone, too. Oi'm all alone except for ye," he whimpered, holding my hand in a weak and childish grasp, "and I want to give ye a Christmas box. 'Tis me claim Oi'm thinkin' av, jist over there," pointing with a finger which fell as he tried to lift it. "Ye're the only wan who belaved me, begor!"

In order to humor him I was obliged to make out a will in my own favor and bequeathing to myself the wonderful claim. Upon a leaf of my note-book Carney wrote

Digitized by Google

a trembling signature, for the last time. That night he died.

I knew that digging a grave in that rocky soil would be a hopeless task and decided to try to find a place that might be a little more yielding. Starting out in a direction yet unknown to me I came upon a small river, running between two gorges, and here I set about making Carney's last earthly bed.

By slow degrees the frozen soil gave way under my ax, the only implement I had, and, when the earth refused to answer the tooth of the steel, I made a fire and thawed it. At the end of two days there was ready a suitable place for my dead companion, rough though it was. Then, with that feeling which comes to us when we realize that we can do no more for a friend, I set about improving the hollow, throwing away all hard substances and smoothing the ground with my lacerated fingers.

Scraping at the brown dirt, something solid stuck there and when I finally dislodged it, a glittering hole was left. Bending closer I looked into the darkness, almost horrified. Had I, too, gone gold-mad? Some distorted fancy led me to believe that the yellow dazzle of the gold was before me!

So great was the shock, after long hours of weary watching, I dared not look again for a space. Then, gathering myself together, I set to work, tearing from the heart of the soil glittering specks which now came in blobs of yellow ore. All day I worked and when night fell I raised my eyes to the heap of gleaming nuggets beside that open grave. Suddenly a thought struck me. Hastily pulling out my note-book I turned feverishly to an old map drawn there by the man who lay just over the hill. Then, sinking to my knees, I sobbed hysterically,

"Carney's Claim! Carney's Claim!"

WALL STREET AND SLEEPY HOLLOW.

How Jake Buchmuller Performed a Rescue.

By JOHN A. HEFFERNAN.

WHEN the Summer breeze blew from the south-southwest, it bore coolness and refreshment to "Sleepy Hollow." For out there-away lay the long bay and the undulating blue ocean—a gaunt, yellow finger of sand thrust between—and they chilled the ardor of the southern gale as it loitered along above them.

Gently blew this breeze the long evening through and tenderly. As a mother rocks the cradle of her sick baby, it swayed the immense wicker rocker in the corner of the porch.

No modern piece of furniture was "Sleepy Hollow." In this chair of dreams, this rocker of many a pipe and many a love

Digitized by Google

memory, this sign and token that in the past was comfort as it is now and, please God, ever will be, there sat rather stiffly, one of the most modern of young modern men.

The sharp features and sharper eyes, the jaunty protrusiveness of chest, the patent-leather foot-gear and high, stiff collar and long, stiff cuffs; these were the signs external of no medievalist, but the marks by which you may know the child of little old New York who is of the latest second of the latest hour of the latest day.

Although the June evening was quite warm and the other boarders, seated upon the piazza or wandering under old trees whose shadows were so sharply outlined by the moonlight on the silver green of the lawn, were clothed in loose white flannels or the dainty and diaphanous fabrics which "half reveal and half conceal" feminine charms, this young man was prim in his black cutaway coat, white waistcoat, creased gray trousers and black derby hat.

Between his brows was a little pucker indicative of perplexing thought, and so deeply was he concerned with what was passing in his mind, that he did not hear the light foot-fall behind him, nor was he conscious of another presence until a soft, slender hand fell upon his shoulder. Then, with a start, he looked up into a pair of large and placid blue eyes set in a perfectly oval face under a mass of brown tresses.

"Oi-yoi!" exclaimed the young man, "that ghostly touch business sure gives father the vibrant spine. Why didn't you honk-honk as you came down the pike?"

A little smile flickered and faded on the serene and saintly countenance of Mrs. Jacob G. Buchmuller.

"Your nervous system must be short-circuited, my dear," she answered quietly. "What's the worry thing?"

She threw one knee over the arm of Sleepy Hollow and looked down upon her husband.

"Nothing wrong with my works," Jacob assured her, "but there's trouble ahead yoost the same, Hilda. Old Pop Armitage has a mind to wander out of his own cornfield and be a big thing in some new barnyard. It seems to me that some wise roosters are getting ready to take the old boy's comb and make a nice red undershirt out of it."

"Tell me!" Celia calmly commanded.

"Well," said Jake, slowly lighting a big dark cigar, "you know that in the breakfast food line the old boy is some hustler; for turning out the sanitary sawdust and putting it up in packages that excite the appetite, he gets the blue ribbon, the iron cross and all other classy decorations, including the long green. If it is a question of putting shavings on the market for matutinal consumption you can not beat old Tom Armitage to it. But somebody had inoculated him with a new dope. He has an idea that his field is too circumscribed for a man of such expanding genius.

"They've fed him the lotus-leaves until he thinks all he has to do is to stalk into the world of high finance and stamp his foot to cause Rockefeller to die of precipitate infantile paralysis and old J. P. Morgan to scuttle the *Corsair* and retire with all on board to the bottom of the briny deep. Dippy little thinker, isn't he, dear? He says it's his for a Trust Company Presidency and a blazing career as a Major-General of Industry and a Julius Cæsar of Finance."

"A trust company—that's a kind of a bank?" asked Celia.

"Yep," said Jake, "a *kind* of a bank."

The emphasis caused the former stenographer of the breakfast food firm of Armitage & Barnes to glance into her husband's face with sudden quickening of interest.

"What kind of bank?" she asked.

"The kind that busts," Jake answered.

"And how do you know all about this?" Mrs. Buchmuller inquired.

"It began to reach into me," Jake explained, slowly puffing at his cigar, "a few days ago when I heard a big resonant voice putting over the 'fine boy' chatter on the old man. I got my lamps on the old fellow's visitor and, lo, baby dear, I had him sized to the millimeter. There was six feet of him with shoulders to match, and one of those noble open faces. Oh Gee! he had all the soft lure of the Sunny South and the swift self-confidence of the Woolly West. He talked like the Twentieth Century Limited and you had to jump quick or he'd get you."

"Yes, I know," said Celia.

"Well," her husband resumed, "this tall and cyclonic person was slapping old Tom on the back and telling him the golden streets of finance were open to him and the banking world need look no longer for a leader if only Thomas Armitage, whose amazing business capacity was the marvel

Digitized by Google

of the commercial world, would only accept the presidency of the Terrapin Trust Company.

"'It's a pipe,' said the stranger, seating himself comfortably on the old man's flat-top and affectionately dropping his big paw on the Governor's shoulder. 'There's a building on Fifth Avenue that will just suit and we can rent it dirt cheap. It has polished granite pillars and a strong, ornamental iron grill-work to protect the company's valuables from robbers from without.'

"'What have you got to stand off those from within?" I asked, for I was getting interested; but the old man didn't like the butt-in and he said, 'Blow!' and I blew before I could get wise to the play from shuffle to show-down. Matrimony must have taken the edge off me, Celia; in the old days I should not have been so indiscreet."

CELIA scorned to make retort; she was watching the shadows dance on the lawn as the leaves fluttered between them and the full moon. A full minute Jake endured the silence before he remarked,

"Yes, yes, very, *very* interesting!"

"I think, Jake," said Celia, vouchsafing no reply to her husband's irrelevant observation, "that I had better go back to work."

"Uh?" grunted Jake.

"Yes," Celia went on, "it seems to me, dear, that I had better return to my profession."

"Unravel! Unravel!" cried her husband. "What's the answer?"

"I think," replied Celia, "that the Terrapin Trust Company will need above all things a competent stenographer and that's my middle name."

Jake leaned back in Sleepy Hollow and laughed out joyously.

"Go to it, Angel-face!" he said fondly. "Go to it!"

Two days after this conversation a man in overalls decorated the plate-glass window of a building in Fifth Avenue with the words "Terrapin Trust Company," in letters of gold two feet high.

Not long thereafter the doors of the new bank were thrown open. Behind thick panels of beveled plate-glass in an office as splendid as was the boudoir of the Princess Scheherezade, was the portly desk of Mr. Thomas Armitage, the President. Hardly less gorgeous was the sanctum of Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann, the First Vice-President and Manager. Mr. Armitage had been assured that the new business would not press upon his other activities; all that would be required of him was a few minutes' attendance in the morning, say twice a week.

"I'll be on the job myself every minute," Dollmann assured him. And this was a promise religiously kept. The big and breezy First Vice-President was at his desk from opening hour until after the doors closed, except for a short time at mid-day spent at some luncheon palace.

Almost from the very beginning, in a small compartment convenient to that of Mr. Dollmann, sat a Raphaelesque young lady tapping the keys of a typewriting machine. She had been installed in her new place several weeks before Mr. Armitage caught sight of her, and then it was but a fleeting glimpse of a vision that floated by, leaving him with one pudgy finger agitating the smooth and shiny surface of his hairless poll. That afternoon as he sat in the office of Armitage & Barnes, he looked across at Jake Buchmuller's desk and coughed to attract the attention of his advertisement writer. Jake looked up, a question in his eyes.

"Er—ahem, Jacob," said Mr. Armitage, "has there been any—anything—unpleasant or like that, you know, at home, you know?"

"Nix," Jake answered.

"Ah—er, ahem," said Mr. Armitage. "I thought—you know—I saw Mrs. Buchmuller, don't you know, in the bank to-day. I looked on the pay-roll, you know, and, ahem, her name was there, but, it was, ahem, her maiden name?"

"Yep," said Jake.

"She was working there?" Mr. Armitage gave the sentence the interrogative inflection.

"Sure," Jake said, responsive but not illuminative.

That was all Mr. Armitage got from Jake. He concluded his afternoon's work, and when he went to the bank next morning he resumed the investigation, placing Mrs. Buchmuller on the witness stand this time.

"Why, how do you do, Miss—er—Mrs. Buchmuller?" he said pleasantly, looking in through the door of her little office.

Digitized by Google

"Good morning, Mr. Armitage," she answered.

"I was somewhat surprised," said Mr. Armitage, "to find you at the desk here?"

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Buchmuller.

"Er—er——" He gave it up. Turning on his heel, he strode off to his own room of magnificence, exploding shortly under his breath deep and fervent maledictions upon all excessively secretive persons in general and the two uncommunicative Buchmullers in particular.

IN HIS own chair, with the big desk in front of him, Mr. Armitage fidgetted uneasily. He picked up a typewritten report and read it over with a gathering frown on his brow; then he laid it down and, clasping his hands behind his head, leaned back and thought. Was it quite the rosy path he had looked for, after all? Pleasant to him it was to be President of so magnificent an institution; it made its appeal to his pride, that pride that had been fed fat by long years of achievement in the breakfast-food trade; but there were intricacies in this line that his mind found it difficult to follow.

For instance, there was the block of Bethlehem & Duluth stock upon which the bank had loaned Hazeltine T. Vignette fifty thousand dollars. With a proprietary note hovering over it, which had been indorsed in turn by the three successive titular owners, that stock had been transferred from Hazeltine T. Vignette to Frazier Van Tine Wallace and from Frazier Van Tine Wallace to R. Lochiel Levy.

"But Dollmann owns it all the time," murmured Mr. Armitage, vigorously scratching his head. "What's the use of all this transferring? It's like going around by Jersey and Staten Island to get to Broooklyn instead of crossing the bridge."

The troubled meditations of the new leader of the financial world were interrupted by the breezy entrance of the First Vice-President. Pure sunshine radiated from the countenance of that functionary; supreme, unworried confidence sat upon his smooth brow.

"What's up, my boy?" he asked, his great voice reverberating. "Got a kink on something? What is it?"

"Um," said Mr. Armitage, "there are some things that get me perplexed in this business. Now this Vignette loan——?"

"Run along chick-a-dee!" remarked the First Vice-President playfully. "Good heavens, my boy, do you think I got you into this to give you nervous prostration? Let me handle all the knotty ones. No, no; never worry about me, I can handle 'em. I've the constitution of an ox and a natural faculty for straightening things out. In a minute I get 'em; see, I get 'em! 'Wonderful faculty,' old Andy Carnegie used to say to me. 'Marvelous analytical power combined with straight-grained moral fiber—irresistible combination, Dollmann, old fellow!' he used to say. Ha-ha! he was the great old jollier, was old Andy."

"But——" interposed Mr. Armitage.

"No 'buts' or 'ifs' in my vocabulary," swept on the First Vice-President. "Those two words do more to retard progress than anything else. Indicate doubt. Fatal, absolutely fatal, my boy, to success in big business."

"Yet——" ventured Mr. Armitage again.

"Tut-tut!" laughed the First Vice-President, "don't worry your mind. The more a fellow fusses mentally, the less mileage he gets out of his thinking-machine. Run smooth, run strong; that's the cheese. John D. always used to say to me, 'That's your strength, Dollmann. No noise, no lost motion—smooth and strong; that's your main hold.' He knows how to plaster it on, old John D.; eh, what?"

"Still——" Mr. Armitage presisted.

"Lunch hour!" announced the First Vice-President in the tone of a referee calling time at a boxing-bout. "Never worry about business after the first stroke of the luncheon hour. The mind needs rest, must have it to work properly. Let's go get a bite? Eh, what? A nice little bite? Those things will come to you quite naturally. Take it easy and it will all break on you like a blaze of light. For the eats—come!"

Mr. Thomas Armitage was not a man of wax. Indeed, his every feature of face and body, bulbous beak, aggressive chin, pugnacious side-whiskers and forward-thrust shoulders, were all eloquent of qualities not possessed by a person easily pulled around by the nose. Notwithstanding all this, he hardly knew how it was that his hat leaped to his head and his body rose from the pivot chair and glided out through the crystal doors and along the smooth sidewalk

It was as if some magician had slipped under him a magic carpet which had wafted

Digitized by Google

him outward and upward and downward and inward, depositing him gently at last in a comfortable leather dining-chair in Delmonico's. The lively and copious conversation of the First Vice-President and the excellence of the luncheon did not deflect his mind, however, from the Vignette loan and other book-keeping enigmas of the Terrapin Trust Company which were beginning to annoy him. He was not by any means in the state of mental contentment that usually followed a good luncheon when he returned to the familiar sanctum in the warerooms of Armitage & Barnes and the shrewd eyes of Mr. Jacob Buchmuller detected immediately the signs of inward unease upon the countenance of his chief.

"SOMETHING wrong, eh?" he asked, looking over from his desk in the corner.

"Er—um, no," Mr. Armitage hesitatingly answered, "but I don't understand all this financial business and"—with sudden energy—"what I don't understand, young man, I don't like, you bet your life!"

"I bet my life," said Jake obediently. "Explanation it."

"Quit that stuff!" his chief cried stormily. "How can I explain it when I told you I don't understand it. Don't be a complete ass, Jake!"

"Oi—yoi!" cried Jacob. "It must be something gingery to get the goat prancing like that. Has Brother Dollmann walked off with the safe yet?"

"Oh, shut up!" Mr. Armitage answered him testily. "Mr. Dollmann is a thoroughly reliable man. He enjoys the confidence of our leading financial men."

"Play it across the board, he does," Jacob answered. "I never saw a man so thoroughly enjoy it."

This retort Mr. Armitage ignored. Jake resumed his work of producing a sensation-creating advertisement for "Frazzled Friskies, the King of Breakfast Foods." The head of the firm took from his pockets some of the tabulated statements he had carried away from the bank and was soon immersed in a study of the figures typewritten thereupon. It was with a shake of his head that did not escape the alert observation of Mr. Buchmuller that he folded them up at last and replaced them in his coat pocket.

Consequently that night as Jake and Celia sat upon the porch, Jake deep in the recesses of Sleepy Hollow and Celia upon the arm of that venerable rocker, the advertising man of Armitage & Barnes held earnest conversation with the confidential stenographer of the Terrapin Trust Company. We perhaps betray a business secret when we say that one result of that conference was the incorporation in the State of New Jersey, with central offices in Newark, of the Natural Induction & Utilization Company, capital stock five hundred thousand dollars.

The directors of the new company were, Jacob G. Buchmuller, Richard Barnes, R. Wolverton Saunders, Peter C. Barnes and Harold Armitage. It might be as well to pin identification tags upon these gentlemen. Harold Armitage was the artist son of the President of the Terrapin Trust Company. Peter C. Barnes was the junior member of the firm of Armitage & Barnes who managed the factory end of the business of the great breakfast-food house. Richard Barnes was his son, and R. Wolverton Saunders was a young person of considerable means who thought business a "beastly bore" and whose engrossing occupation at present was the pursuit of an elusive young lady called Polly, the sister of Mrs. Richard Barnes. Mr. Buchmuller you have met before.

The first meeting of the corporation was held in the small office which served at the same time in a similar capacity several other pretentious industrial organizations. The meeting was opened by Mr. Harold Armitage's very pertinent inquiry:

"Now, Jake, what are we here for?"

"Mainly," replied Jake, "to elect me President and to pass a resolution conferring upon me the power to dispose of the capital stock and borrow money by all legal methods for the carrying out of the company's purpose."

"Might a fellah awsk, now," Mr. Saunders said languidly, "what is the purposes of the company?"

Jake tossed the articles of incorporation across the table, but Mr. Saunders waved the paper away.

"Ah, yes," he drawled, "that beastly rubbish is all right, you know; but what is it you really intend to do with us all, old top?"

"Well," Jake said, "that's another proposition. If you yearn for the straight dope, bare your arm and I'll shoot it into you. Harold's dad here is up against the brace

Digitized by Google

game for keeps, but the old gent is so positive in his opinions, don't you know, he has such a hefty hunch upon his own business sense, that he thinks the lemon's a cherry. They've handed him the Presidency of the Terrapin Trust Company, an institution that ought to be kept outside the fire-limits, for, believe me, it's liable to generate spontaneous combustion at any minute and it's the real cheese in pyrotechnics. A breezy bunco-steerer of the name of Dollmann runs it. Already they've driven the wedge between the old man and his mazuma to the tune of eighty thousand, and Brother Dollmann is some with the mallet, believe muh.

"Now the first real business of the Natural Induction & Utilization Company in the great commercial mart is to borrow ninety thousand piasters from the Terrapin Trust Company upon the treasurer's note and a hundred thousand dollars' worth of preferred stock. The extra ten thousand is a tidy little handout for the thrifty Brother Dollmann. Follow on?"

Mr. Saunders yawned.

"It's beastly perplexing, old fellah," he said, "but —— the details, I say; go as far as you like, you know."

The other grinned and nodded.

"All to the mustard," said Jake. "Now, if you please, pass the resolutions."

IN DUE order and according to the forms made and provided by the sovereign State of New Jersey, the corporation thereupon elected its board of officers with Mr. Buchmuller as President and Mr. Saunders as Treasurer, and a resolution was adopted unanimously, clothing the President with powers of weight and width. Not long was he in exercising them. The very next day the attorney for the corporation had a whispered chat with the First Vice-President of the Terrapin Trust Company in the office of the latter. Therefrom outflowed a sequence of events which may thus be summarized: there passed into the vault of the trust company certain illuminated documents representing ownership in the Natural Induction & Utilization Company and out through the teller's window the sum of ninety thousand dollars, eighty thousand of which streamed directly to a safety deposit vault, leaving ten thousand to find its way by devious channels to the deposit account of Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann in a national bank.

Serenely the Summer days wore on, blue and golden from opalescent dawn to scarlet sunset and flooded with bright moon-rays or luminously misty with dusky starshine after the twilight hour. Night after night, upon the porch of their suburban boarding-house, resting against the back of old Sleepy Hollow, the President of the Natural Induction & Utilization Company and the confidential stenographer of the Terrapin Trust Company talked business. Toward the golden close of August some slight signs of storm became discernible to the financial weather-wise who watched the commercial sky. Men who lived with their finger-tips upon Wall Street's tell-tale pulse became fidgety.

Things, little in the newspapers, but huge in their influence upon the delicate tensions of the country's credit system, warned the wary of trouble on the way. Four printed lines telling of the failure of a factory in the Middle West, ten of the failure of the cotton crop in a Southern State, seven of the collapse of a bank in Oklahoma—these were the things that made Wall Street uneasy; while the general public, unregarding, marched on with unconcern. The pressure bore most heavily at the weakest point, of course, and the weakest point discovered itself, of all places, at the magnificent Terrapin Trust Company with all its splendor of rich woods, polished crystals marvelously clear; with its marble counting-room and solid-looking Colonial pillars.

The first intimation of trouble came to Mr. Armitage over the telephone late one sultry afternoon. He received a "call" from the First Vice-President.

"Hello, old boy!" Mr. Dollmann saluted cheerfully, but there was something in his tone that stiffened the battle-flag side-whiskers of Mr. Armitage. "Things are a bit squally," the First Vice-President went on. "I want to have a sit-down with you to-night in the directors' room and chew them over a little. Nothing to worry about; we shall be able to fix it up all right, but there's a storm ahead and we want to take in a few feet of canvas. Don't fret yourself, now; trust me; I'm just the boy to handle things in a blow. As old J. J. Hill used to say to me, 'You've an instinct for rocks ahead, Dollmann; you seem to smell 'em. An invaluable faculty in financial bad weather.' Great fellow for the soft soap was old J. J. Be sure to come. Good-by!"

Mr. Armitage dropped the receiver and

Digitized by Google

walked straight to the desk of his advertising manager.

"Jake," he said, "do you know what my accounts in cash total at present?"

The quiet seriousness of the old man's voice struck Jake. He said nothing, however, but reached into a desk drawer and drew out a sheet of paper.

"Fifty thousand in the Frothingham National Bank, one hundred thousand in the Fourteenth National, and eighty thousand nine hundred and twelve in the Fish & Oyster Bank," he read.

"What immediately convertible securities have I?"

From a second sheet Jake read:

"Two hundred thousand United States bonds and one hundred and eighty thousand New York 4's in the safe deposit vault."

"All right," Mr. Armitage said, nodding his head as he added the items together in his mind. "By the way, Jake, I'll want you to come up to the bank with me to-night. I don't like the look of things. I'm getting on to the curves of that fellow Dollmann, you bet your life!"

"Yes, sir," said Jake.

"I suspected him from the beginning." He looked at Jake, interrogatively aggressive.

"Yes, sir," said Jake.

WHEN Mr. Armitage and Jake paused before the door of the bank a few minutes before nine o'clock, a slender man in a soft hat stepped out of the shadow of one of the pillars and laid his hand on Jake's shoulder.

"Excuse me a second," Buchmuller said to his chief, and he stepped a few feet away to talk with the stranger.

"Is he in?" Jake asked.

"He is," said the stranger.

"Did he bring it?" asked Jake.

"He did," said the stranger.

"Good!" commented Jake. "You can wait here."

He returned to Mr. Armitage, who asked:

"Who is your friend?"

"A fellow I met at the races," said Jake. "He works for the Pinkertons. You haven't changed the safe combination, have you?"

"No," said Mr. Armitage. "Why do you ask that?"

"I'll explain later," Jake assured him. "You go right to the directors' room and I'll be in in a minute. I want to say a word to Celia."

Mr. Dollmann was not in the directors' room when the President entered it. He had stopped a minute to get some papers from his own desk and when he breezily entered the large board-room he found seated at the big table not only the confidential stenographer whom he had directed to attend, and the President whom he had invited, but a young man with keen eyes and a pleasant smile.

"Mr. Dollmann," said Mr. Armitage, "this is my friend, Mr. Buchmuller. My relations with him have been of a confidential nature for a long time and I thought it wise to have him present this evening."

"Ahem!" Mr. Dollmann cleared his throat. "It is rather unusual—indeed, I might say quite extraordinary, to have a stranger present at a discussion of the affairs of a financial institution. It has never been done in my time, and it seems to me perilous, very perilous, my boy. One of the cardinal principles of finance, as old J. Pierpont said to me some years ago, is 'Keep it close, my boy; keep it close.' He's the daddy of 'em all, old J. Pierpont."

"Nevertheless," said Mr. Armitage, quietly enough, but with a hard glitter in his eyes, "Mr. Buchmuller will remain."

One swift glance, comprehensive and penetrating, Mr. Dollmann flashed at the President. Then he laughed. Striking a match, he lighted a big cigar and threw himself into the billows of leather upholstery.

"Of course, my boy," he said genially, leaning back comfortably and crossing his legs, "you are just a little new in finance and if you really desire that your friend shall be present, I am sure you have reasons for your confidence in his discretion. Let us get down to cases, then."

"That's what we're here for," Mr. Armitage replied.

"Well," said Mr. Dollmann, "proposition No. 1 is the loan from the Deak Oak Bank of Oklahoma. On that——"

"What loan from the Deak Oak Bank of Oklahoma?" Mr. Armitage cut in.

"A little matter of fifty thousand which I borrowed for investment in a very fine looking industrial venture. It so happens that the loan was made on the bank's credit and the investment in my own name, but in the bank's behalf, of course. The failure of the Deak Oak will undoubtedly disclose our

Digitized by Google

obligation and that may cause some uneasiness among our creditors here. It is to devise means to meet this situation that I desired to talk with you. I anticipate demands upon us for something approximating one hundred and fifty thousand and this amount it will be necessary for us to raise before morning.

"Of course I have not given myself any uneasiness about the matter, knowing very well that so small an amount would not seriously embarrass you and that, in view of the consequences of our failure to—er—meet the situation, you would loan it to the bank, upon proper security of course, without hesitation and without reluctance. It is one of the little matters that come up in big business, old boy. But never fret, the effect of our prompt payment upon a sudden demand will be to strengthen us enormously and thus this slight—er—check will inure to our ultimate benefit."

"Fine for the fairies," interjected Mr. Buchmuller.

Mr. Dollmann, who had been watching the face of the President, turned in surprise, but Mr. Armitage seemed not to have heard the flippant comment of his friend.

"Suppose," he said, "I haven't the ready cash?"

"Oh, impossible!" Mr. Dollmann prodded at the suggestion with the glowing tip of his cigar as if seeking to drive it away. "Impossible, my boy. You surely can not be in a position to wreck everything upon so small a matter. You see, any hesitation upon our part about meeting this little affair would result in other demands which by reason of the—shall I say immobile—nature of such securities as we have on hand would force us to close down. Impossible, my boy, quite impossible!"

"Do you mean the bank has been wrecked?" Armitage spoke in a low tone, but there was a tense quality in his voice and his ruddy face had paled slightly. Dollmann concentrated his gaze upon the cigar which he held in his outstretched hand.

"If," he answered very slowly, "a big business institution meets with such conditions as are at times unavoidable, there is always talk among the suffering depositors of mismanagement. Transactions that are quite regular, you know, and are customary among fiduciary concerns are presented in a false light and the public is merciless. It is one of the hazards of the game; but why consider it now? You are not going to face it; you are going to make good."

THE "blaze of light" had broken upon the old merchant. He knew the man before him for a scoundrel and his mind ran rapidly over his own resources. They were large, but would they be adequate? How far had the thing gone? How deep was the hole into which he would have to fling his private fortune? Was there ahead of him, yawning at his very feet the pit of infamy in which would sink forever not only his hard-won private fortune, but the good name he had kept in the winning of it? With his brow on his hands, he leaned forward, his face hidden. Jake looked at him and saw two big beads of perspiration break from his forehead.

"Mr. Armitage," said a soft, even, contralto voice. The President looked up with a start and turned to the calm and holy loveliness of the confidential stenographer.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

Celia had a neatly typewritten slip in her hand and from this she read:

"On June 16 Mr. Hazeltine T. Vignette borrowed fifty thousand dollars upon his note and stock of the Bethlehem & Duluth Company, of face value of eighty thousand dollars, which amount was paid by our teller into the hands of Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann, who deposited it in his personal account in the Eastern Trust Company. On June 23, Mr. Frazier Van Tine Wallace borrowed one hundred and twenty thousand dollars upon his note, unsecured, which amount the teller paid in cash to Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann, who deposited it in his personal account in the Fish & Oyster National Bank.

"On July 22, Mr. R. Lochiel Levy borrowed sixty thousand dollars upon his note, secured by debenture certificates of the Goldbug Exploration Company of face value of one hundred thousand dollars, and that amount was paid by our teller to Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann and deposited by him in his personal account in the Otranto National Bank. On August 8, the Natural Induction & Utilization Company borrowed ninety thousand dollars upon the note of R. Wolverton Saunders, secured by one hundred thousand dollars of the company's stock certificates and, on account of that loan, ten thousand dollars was paid by

Digitized by Google

check of Mr. R. Wolverton Saunders to Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann as a bonus and deposited by him in his personal account in the Northeastern Trust Company of America."

During this recital a deep silence had fallen in the room upon which Celia's flute-like voice floated like the lark's song on the hush of the morning and against which the tick of the crystal clock beat like hammer-blows. Dollmann sat as if petrified, his right arm outstretched and the cigar between his fingers, his left hand gripping the arm of his chair. His eyes bulged out as if there were tremendous pressure behind. Armitage was leaning forward, his eyes wide open as he gazed at the demure beauty of the face under the brown tresses. Jake sat back, shrewdly watching the face of the First Vice-President, a little smile playing about his lips.

"Stung!" he said, and at the sound of his voice the two other men started and sat up straight. Celia calmly laid down the paper.

"That ninety thousand, Governor," Jake said, addressing the President, "consisted of your eighty thousand that Old Boy Breezy induced you to pass over. Harold and I and some of the boys thought it would be a shame to let him get away with so soft a play, so we framed up a phony one over in Jersey and made it come through. Only, we had to slip this gink ten thousand as his little commish. Cunning kid, isn't he?"

Dollmann rose to his feet slowly. He had recovered his self-possession and he looked from one to the other of the three in front of him with a sneer on his lips:

"So," he said, "you thought you were the wise ones, you three! You had an idea you could frame me up, eh? But how are you going to frame up the mob that will be howling around here to-morrow morning? I confess some slight interest in that. And you will have to face them alone, my friends, for I am going away from here. I took the precaution to draw from the bank to-day those tidy little sums just summarized by this amiable and innocent child and they will keep me fairly comfortable for a while elsewhere. I have it all in my traveling bag, and my automobile is at the curb. And the securities you will find in the safe are, as I said, rather immobile. Ha!"

Long ago when men worked with their muscles for raw gold Tom Armitage tracked across the continent and in the new El Dorado on the side of the Rockies, played the game in the rough. And now fifty years of civilization slipped from the shoulders of the old miner like a cloak that is discarded, and under his nose Mr. W. Wrayburn Dollmann found the gleaming barrel of an ugly forty-five. Behind it were the hard eyes of a man who could hold it steady and shoot it true.

"You pitiful, low-down tin-horn!" the old man bellowed, his finger closing on the trigger. "So you came to me with your marked deck, did you? Well, I was fool enough to sit in with you and I may go down in disgrace, but the pot lays as she lays, you pie-faced crook! You go down first with a plug of metal in you, —— you!"

"Nix on the gun thing!" Jake Buchmuller yelled, as he sprang forward and flung up the pistol-barrel. "There's no need of it, Governor. This big stiff has made a slight mistake. He said *he* had the mazuma in his bag. He passed it out on the bias; *I* have the mazuma in *his* bag. He carelessly brought it with him and left it in the safe when he came in and I carefully took it out of the safe, thinking, from certain information a friend gave me, that he might do just that. It is under the chair on which I have been sitting—see! isn't this it?" He reached down and drew forth a big brown traveling bag, which, as he ripped it open, disclosed huge bundles of yellow-backed bills.

With a scream of rage Dollmann sprang for his lost loot, but he recoiled before the gleam of Armitage's gun.

"Get out of here, you viper!" cried the old man, his voice shaking with anger. "Get out quick or I'll lose my temper and drop you, you snake! And, you bet your life this bank 'll open to-morrow morning, ready to meet any man who may come for his money! And we'll have a new First Vice-President, you bet your life! Git, and git quick!"

COOL and sweet from the dark ocean and over the long stretch of the lower bay came the breeze to Sleepy Hollow. And Jake Buchmuller, sitting therein, with one foot carelessly but comfortably deposited upon his derby hat—a fact of which he was utterly unconscious—drew in a long breath of the delicious night wind and, looking up into the celestial eyes of his wife, exclaimed:

"Celia, my dear, this has sure been some exciting evening, eh what?"

Digitized by Google

FORBIDDEN TREASURE

By Beatrix Demarest Lloyd and Esher Martin

SYNOPSIS: Mark Stuart, on a geological expedition to Iceland, finds there an American yacht with its millionaire invalid owner Mr. Lee, his daughter Nora, and his physician Dr. Berwind. At Haldr's inn Nora treats Stuart with undue haughtiness, and keen hostility arises between them. A treasure bloodily stolen by ancient Vikings from a Sicilian abbey had been cursed by the dying Abbot so that when brought to Iceland the curse made an ice-desert of a once fertile part of the island. An Icelandic family, the Olafsens, murdered the surviving Vikings and the curse falls on them. Stuart recovers an ancient bell, whose inscription concerning the treasure is deciphered by Mr. Lee. Stuart explores the desolate coast of the Vatna Jökull, where the fatal treasure is supposed to be, is left to die by his deserting crew, and is rescued by the yacht. The yacht's captain is washed overboard under suspicious circumstances, and Healy, the substitute mate, assumes command. During an unsuccessful half-serious hunt for the treasure the boat is suddenly frozen in for the Winter. Stuart learns Dr. Berwind is treating Mr. Lee for the morphin habit. Nora, after continued ill-treatment of Stuart, makes overtures of friendship. Healy gains an ugly influence over the crew. Later he makes a private search for the treasure. Mr. Lee, stealing morphin, becomes worse and makes more trouble between the crew and the others.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A FIGURE IN THE NIGHT

MARK STUART viewed it as in no wise remarkable that sleep was a long time in coming to him that night. Unable to sit quietly, turning over the interminable thoughts of their desperate situation, he felt the need of space to walk about in and went up on deck. Wrapped in his furs against the piercing cold, he paced the length of the afterdeck alone in the sulphurous mist. The motionless yacht was outlined in black rays of ash-deposit, like a weird drawing.

From the forecastle the wind brought him scraps and snatches of sound, sharp bits of altercation, or the low rumble of discontent. Like the punctuation on a printed page, among the disjointed cadences of speech were the raps and clinks of the glasses which were helping the crew to pass the tedium of the evening hours.

Stuart almost could find it in his heart to smile at the remembrance of their ignominious retreat from the companionway, and he wondered what, if any, effect Mr. Lee's apparent insanity would have upon their plans. It might be the means of keeping them at a safe distance, and though it was a grisly protection to depend upon, he welcomed anything that might make Nora's position less insecure.

Wondering whether the men were discussing the unexpected termination of their evening's entertainment, Stuart went softly forward and became an eavesdropper at the forecastle.

There was no laughter among the men, no bits of Rose Marie came chanting out between gulps of grog and snatches of boisterous talk. Depression sat upon every countenance, and the amount of drink they had consumed served only to magnify the appearance of their fears. Svenson, haggard and wild-eyed, sat by himself, pouring drink after drink down his parched throat, in the vain hope that it might reduce the conviction of impending disaster that so overwhelmed him. He was a prophet without honor in his own ship,

Digitized by Google

but the men had heard his cry of "Berserker's rage" and they looked askance at him and wondered what it meant.

Sunk in his own terrified and drunken despair, he stared dumbly before him, his great hands, when not engaged in lifting his glass to his mouth, hanging with a loose helplessness between his knees. Fong Charley had gone to sleep, the only one in the crowd who had been able, even with the aid of the liquor, to accomplish this simple miracle. He lay in a heap, away from the collected group of the men, his slanting yellow lids shut comfortably upon his dreams. It took more than a maniac on an ice-bound yacht to prevent Fong from having his raveled sleave of care knitted up for him.

In a gloomy group, the nearer for the sake of their misery, which wanted company and wanted it very close indeed, the rest of the crew sat together. Stuart could see that Healy alone, with perhaps Levine, kept up any sort of show-courage, of belief in the future, of faith in the ultimate success of their plans.

It came to him as a shock—though Berwind could have assured him it was nothing unusual—to see Katie sitting there with the men, sitting next to Healy with his arm about her.

"It's all very well for you to say wait, wait," growled Grimson, eying the Captain briefly from the edge of his glass. "Blast me if I can see what there is to be gained by waiting!"

"Well, what do you want to do?" demanded Healy. "What is it you want to be doing so prompt-like, Grimson?"

Grimson shifted on his chair. "Why," he said, "everything you say is all pushed up into the some-day class."

Durkee snorted his ugly laugh from near by. "Youse don't take de Cap'en," he said. "He is givin' you de string dat w'en he digs up dis box o' gold he's been parley-vou'ing about, youse'll have a bunch o' nickels to go out and t'row away on yourself—see? He's a reg'lar Cap'en Kidd, is de Cap'en, and he's a kidding of youse, dat's w'ot he is." The man laughed at his own witticism.

Healy took the attack good-humoredly. "What's good enough to trail this millionaire crowd all the way from Reykjavik was good enough for me to look into," he said. "I heard scraps of the talk from the day I signed on with them, 'n' it sure looked like there was somethin' in it."

"And 'ow does it look now?" quoth Levine, in a mixture of curiosity and contempt for the whole idea.

"It looks very much like nothing doin'," replied Con Healy calmly. He let the announcement sink in upon his audience and then, "Wait a bit," he said maliciously.

"Aw, wait, wait!" chorused the men in drunken disgust.

"Well, what's the good of doin' anythin' now?" retorted Healy, somewhat out of patience. "You can't sail away till the ice breaks up, can you?"

"We can go by land, can't we?" retorted Grimson.

"They say not," said Healy. "Over in Reykjavik they say you can't cross the Vatna. It's been tried."

"Aw, dey say, dey say!" growled Durkee. "Dey wants us to run the bloomin' boat, dat's their lay! Wot would de t'ree of 'em do and de dopy lark, if we was to light out and leave 'em in their old tub, eh?"

"You're a lot of chumps," said Healy calmly. "Do you think all the money in the world is stowed away in holes? Look at this yacht. What do you suppose she's worth? Two million, if she's worth a penny, with her nickel-plated turbines 'n' all her silver furnishings 'n' things. 'N' down in that safe below—all that cash 'n' the girl's diamonds, eh? Say, what's the matter with you people? Do you think I'm losin' my grip on this thing?"

THEN a low, murmuring roar of approval went round the group. "That's the stuff—money and diamonds and a swift yacht to get away in!" said Grimson, licking his lips.

"Wot do we do with the toffs?" asked Levine, his eyes narrowed to a sinister intentness.

Healy laughed. "You ought to know what we'll do with one of them," he said.

"I knows wot we'll dew with one of them, if it's the gal you mean," said Levine. "That much is mine. But the dope-gent and the doc and that bloody fool that knocked me down—wot 'appens to them, eh?"

Healy looked at him and smiled. A long silence filled the place. The men listened with a drunken intentness for the Captain's

Digitized by Google

answer. But it did not come in any more expressive way than in the steady, meaning smile with which he continued to fix the man opposite him. Gradually the purport of it formed a way into their rum-fogged brains. It was a large step for them, but they followed him in their drunken, lurching manner.

"Good!" said Grimson faintly.

Stuart understood as well. The cheerful willingness of the men to plan his murder and Berwind's and Mr. Lee's did not surprise him, nor was the plan for Nora's future unknown to him. But he had heard enough to realize that the attack might soon come, for all their fear of returning to the maniac-ridden cabin, and he wanted immediately to consult with Berwind. He found his way down the companionway in almost as deep darkness as if a real night had fallen. The faint night-light burning near Berwind's door showed the furnishing of the saloon but dimly.

Suddenly, as he crossed the space, the opening of the very door toward which he was going stopped him in a start of surprise. It was a coincidence that Berwind should elect to issue forth at the very moment he was going to seek him. But in another instant he perceived that it was not Berwind who had so startled him.

Stealthily and with a curious noiselessness, the tall, thin figure of Mr. Lee, wrapped in a wadded silk dressing-gown, came out into the corridor from Berwind's room. Stuart could see a small black object in his hand, and his mind flew to a quick conclusion. This was the sequel of the evening's outbreak and the explanation of the sick man's sudden change to docility. He had concluded to wait until the Doctor was asleep, and then, stealing in noiselessly so as not to wake him, to rob him of the morphia he had himself purloined before.

Mr. Lee closed the door of Berwind's room without a sound and apparently with some difficulty, as Stuart oddly remembered once to have struggled with a soapy bathroom knob.

He was smiling lightly, Stuart could see that as he turned from the door with a slightly puzzled frown upon his still smiling face and, in the light of the night-lamp in the bracket on the wall, examined his empty hand curiously.

Stuart's heart gave a hurtful leap and then stood like a stone, motionless, in his breast. The hand that Mr. Lee held toward the lamp was wet with something red and glistening.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE BELL CLAIMS A VICTIM

MOTIONLESS in the saloon, Stuart stood in silence till the tall, bent form had vanished down the dark of the corridor. An instant later the click of a bolt came to his ears and he started mechanically forward.

"Berwind!" he called.

All was silent. He pushed the door open and entered.

In his narrow bed, Berwind was lying in the motionless silence of sleep. He was covered by a plaid rug drawn up over his shoulders, one arm flung out in the abandon of repose. Upon his head——

Stuart stood staring, straining his eyes through the half-light. Some freakish effect of light in the curtained room made it appear that the sober Berwind had genially gone to bed with his silk hat on.

Then as his eyes made out the illusion, a fearful constriction, like the hand of a strangler, closed upon his throat. For what had so resembled the ordinary top-hat of civilization a longer glance made out to be the massive silver bell which he himself had cut down from the tower of the unlucky Olafsens, and which now, rakishly a-tilt, hid the sleeper's face from his view! Looked at impartially, the spectacle might have appeared grotesque. But Stuart knew—no one better!—the weight of that silver bell.

For one instant he stood motionless beside the berth. Then slowly, resolutely, he stretched out his two hands toward the bell. Slowly putting out, as it seemed, all his forces, both muscular and spiritual, he raised its massive weight.

From what lay beneath he turned away his eyes.

Not from the hand of the enemy had the blow fallen. Not even in open fight had the end come gallantly. But here lay Berwind, high soul and loyal heart, crushed to death like a reptile in a hole.

Against the enemy Berwind had made ready his weapons. Stuart recalled the resolute smile, the daring gleam of bravery in the Doctor's face when, a few hours

Digitized by Google

before, he had brought his pistols out to give him one and pack the other. But who has ever thought to arm himself against the coming of a friend?

He put down the great silver bell upon the floor, and for an instant closed his eyes as a wave of bitter nausea swept over him. Then resolutely controlling his momentary weakness, he leaned down over the motionless form. Was it possible, even behind this mask, that life was not yet extinct? Was it possible, even yet, that restorative means might be taken? With an effort he opened the shirt and laid his hand upon the heart. The flesh was yet warm, but the heart was still. Evidently, as his eyes told him with only too desperate a certainty, there was no hope of any lingering spark of life behind that obliterated face.

In an emotion as genuine as he had ever known, Stuart bowed his head.

Then with reverent touch he drew up the bedclothes over the disfigured face. No more time, so much he perceived clearly, was to be wasted in lamentation. With Mr. Lee lost in unspeakable mania and Berwind gone, the responsibility which once had been shared by three now fell solely upon him. Berwind was dead, but Nora Lee still lived. Could the dead man speak, Stuart knew well that it would be to chide him for wasting in useless regrets the moments needed in her precious service.

There was one thing he felt must be the first to be accomplished. He and Berwind —oh, poor Berwind!—had agreed between them that Mr. Lee must be secured in his own stateroom at once.

Stepping out into the passage, he went down, as stealthily as a thief, to the door of Mr. Lee's cabin. With a slow, noiseless pressure he tried the knob. The door was bolted on the other side.

For an instant Stuart puzzled the problem. Then he turned and hurried noiselessly down the corridor and to the deck above. About the belaying-pins of the mainmast the idle halyards were confusedly coiled. A few slashes of his jack-knife gave Stuart a tangled length of stout rope.

As he was cutting through the stubborn fibers, the murmur of voices from the forecastle told him the crew were still discussing their future.

With the rope in his hand he descended again into the cabin and set himself to his task. Lashing a clove hitch about the handle of Mr. Lee's door, he carried the line to the doorknob opposite and drew the bight taut and made it fast. Both doors opening inward, the device would indubitably prove successful.

SO MUCH done, the second and infinitely more difficult part of Stuart's task remained. That dreadful thing that lay helpless in Berwind's bed must be disposed of before Nora woke.

To make sure against the possibility of incautious entrance, Stuart as he passed that quiet cabin locked the door from the outside. Then he went up again on deck, and this time went forward to the crew's quarters.

Under Healy's artfully exhibited bravado and the wholesale plying of that courage commonly called Dutch, it was evident that some of the men had begun to recover a measure of their usual spirits.

Stuart called Healy to come above, and in few words recounted the catastrophe to the enemy who formed his sole dependence in this emergency and asked for his aid. Healy merely stared at him.

The thread of Stuart's nerve-resistance was nearly snapped in two. "Do you understand, Captain?" he asked sternly. "This work must be done. Will you help me do it?"

Healy's pockmarked face, confronting him, was curiously blank of expression, but in the pale rays of midnight Stuart saw the tiny points of moisture that glistened upon his forehead, beheld his mouth open and shut helplessly like that of a fish in process of asphyxiation. A voice came from below:

"'Ello, Cap'n, wot's the row?"

Still without a word, Healy turned and elaborately descended the companion. The furiously impatient Stuart, thrusting his face down again through the reeking aperture, heard the Captain break his silence:

"The old man's broke loose again," he said hoarsely. "Berwind's dead in his bed—*murdered!*"

The silence within seemed no more than an echo of the eternal silence that brooded without. Then Svenson's voice, guttural and lingering, cut the stillness:

"It haf begun!" he said.

And like rennet flung into milk, his words curdled the silence.

Digitized by Google

In the presence of the unmanned cowardice before him, Stuart felt more clearly than ever how much he needed to keep a grip upon his strength. He spoke down into the hole clearly and without hesitation, hoping to infuse something of his own calm into these terror-shaken bullies.

But from the ring of upturned hairy faces beneath him silence snapped back in the speaker's teeth like the flick of a whip-lash. Yet plainly it was not the surliness of mutiny that now withheld their tongues and hands from the offer of aid, but something deeper and more implacable. Upon all those upturned faces, of diverse nationality and infinitely varying cast, Stuart beheld the stamp of a common emotion, which compelled a resemblance more vivid and more mysterious than the seal of a common blood. One and all, the men sat silent in the cold grip of Fear.

"Since none of you, then, will help me—a nice pack of cowards you are! —" he interjected, stirred at the craven exhibition, "will you please tell me, Captain Healy, where I may find the tarpaulin—and—the materials for sewing?"

Healy, restored to something like his usual complaisance, directed him to the slop-chest, and Stuart, whose eager desire was to finish his ghastly task before Nora woke, and realizing that he must work alone, hurried away. When, with the materials he required, he reëntered Berwind's cabin, he found all tranquil and unchanged. But as he spread out his tarpaulin on the floor, threaded his needle with sail-cotton, and buckled on his leather palm, he kept his back studiously turned toward the motionless, plaid-covered shape upon the bed.

Then he pulled himself up sharply. Never for an instant must he allow the continual dropping of disaster to wear away the stone of his strength. And since all that he was doing he could honestly feel was for the sake of the girl who had become so dear to him, he should find ample courage for the doing of the tasks however grewsome they might be. He spread the tarpaulin smoothly again, locked his jaws together on a long breath, and turned toward the bed.

Berwind, though a short man, was thick-shouldered and heavily built, and Stuart's athletic muscles were strained to the utmost. To roll the unwieldy fabric closely about the lifeless form, to cover tenderly and yet with shuddering the sightless face, these things taxed his will-power also and strange sounds like sobs rose in his throat continually which had to be repressed in a hurtful silence. This finished, he seated himself on the floor, with needle and palm. In his unaccustomed fingers the three-cornered sail-needle bit slowly through the hard, sticky ply of the tarred sail-cloth.

Suddenly he started, listened. About him the still air vibrated and tingled—a new cry, thin-drawn, melancholy, which seemed not so much a sound as the very crystallization of the silence of death. Then, through the half-open door, a little, dark shape trotted in. To Stuart's nerves, already overwrought by the events of the night, the relief seemed almost too great. "Humbug!" he cried in a great gasp of relief.

The bull-terrier, lifting his blunt nose, cried mournfully. The long, reverberating wail echoed through the silence of the yacht. Stuart turned sharply—please God, the dog had not already wakened his mistress with his infernal noise!

"Charge, Humbug! Quiet, Humbug! Charge, good dog!"

But down the passage came the light flicker of a step, and Stuart, turning in the thrill of a sorry fear, had no time even to rise to his feet before Nora's voice, soft and wondering, came to him from the other side of the half-open door:

"Humbug! Humbug!"

"No, no, Miss Lee!"

No sooner were the words spoken than Stuart realized his mistake. Without the appeal of his sharp cry, without its message of the unusual and the alarming, it was impossible that the girl would have entered Berwind's cabin at all. But the mischief was done. The door was pushed wide open. There, in the entrance, stood a little pink-robed figure, whose large eyes stared at him from beneath a cloud of dusky dishevelled hair. From his face the eyes dropped to the closely wrapped oblong by which he knelt. Humbug, lifting his dark muzzle, howled again.

Nora Lee spoke; her voice was thin and dry.

"What is the matter with Humbug? What are you doing? *What is that?*"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XXXV

FONG CHARLEY HELPS OUT

AFTER an hour or two of the unsatisfactory sleep of exhaustion, his mind still fagged with its resistance to the assaults of disaster, Stuart woke in what might be called the next day had it not been morning already when he flung himself down upon his couch, so utterly and cruelly spent. His watch told him that it was just eight o'clock. He lay listening for the ship's bell, but no sound came.

The stillness of the eve of Doomsday hung about the place. No footsteps sounded and no voices. It was evident that the demoralization of the crew had reached its climax, when upon their mutinous disaffection had been piled the horrid news of the tragedy.

He went out into the saloon, dreading to look down the opposite passage toward those two doors, the one so securely lashed, the other which would never again need a fastening. To his surprise he found the Chinese boy setting the breakfast-table for four, as methodically as on any day of the voyage of the *Blessed Damozel*.

"Breakfast, Fong?" he said kindly.

"Morning," said Fong, with a wag of his pigtailed head. The eternal order of things was ever preserved in his methodical intelligence. "No breakfast."

"No breakfast? But you are setting the table."

"Fong job allee day settee table pidgen," replied the young Celestial. "Cook no cook."

There was a sincerity of faithfulness about the heathen's stupidity that warmed Stuart's lone heart. He watched the bony, yellow hands lay the forks and knives of the breakfast service with unalterable precision. Finally, with a sigh he said,

"You are setting four places, Fong."

"Tell Fong settee four places," returned the imperturbable creature.

"But Dr. Berwind is dead, Fong," said Stuart with a grave sadness. "You must take away that place."

Obediently Fong gathered up the silver and the napkin that marked the place where, only the night before, poor Berwind had sat at dinner. There was no change of expression upon his yellow face. The quiet, unemotional action seemed to Stuart emblematic of the world's humor. As men died and left the Great Table, their places were merely swept away.

Stuart's heart was very heavy with his sense of loss and his over-great anxieties. But he could not help but smile at the indefatigable Fong, who now, having completed the breakfast arrangements, stood quietly at his place near the serving-table. There being no breakfast to serve did not enter into his calculations at all. As he had said, he had been told to set every morning at eight o'clock four covers. It was "Fong's job."

"Can you cook?" asked Stuart, in a final inspiration.

The Celestial nodded gravely.

"Could you cook us some breakfast—make some coffee?"

Again the pigtail-bound head slowly made the motion of assent.

"Good!" said Stuart. "Go do it, like the complaisant mandarin that you are, will you?"

Unruffled and acquiescent, Fong promptly departed in pursuit of his new orders, and Stuart sat down upon the chair nearest him to laugh wanly. There was something grotesque as well as touching in this single creature's faithfulness, his literal acceptance of the old order and unwillingness to admit the new except when so directed by authority.

He was on his feet again in an instant to greet Nora Lee. She came in with her eyes upon him. He could see easily that she had not slept at all. He could see also that all the questions he had refused to answer the night before when she had discovered him at his hideous labor were again upon her lips. Instinctively he waved them away with a motion of his hand. "Not yet, Miss Nora, not yet. Fong has gone to make us some coffee, and you must have that before you take upon yourself the burden of all this sad story. Believe me, it will be vastly better for us both. You will help me, won't you, to try to keep your strength up. God knows how long a pull we are going to have of it!"

She eyed him gravely and then put out her hand. "It is surely the least I can do for you," she said. He touched her hand gratefully and took her to her chair. "My father is not out yet?"

Stuart had to try twice before he could

Digitized by Google

answer in a simple monosyllable. He came from behind her chair and took his place.

"THERE is no one now," said Nora sadly, "no one but you and me to take care of father. I am afraid we shall make but poor substitutes for dear Dr. Berwind——" Her voice became tremulous and stopped. "Do you think, perhaps," she said a moment later, looking up at him, "perhaps my father is waiting for Dr. Berwind to come to him? He does not know, does he, what happened in the night?" Before he could answer her the idea had become productive of results. She rose to her feet and went quickly toward the passage. "I will go to him," she said.

Stuart jumped up instantly. "No, wait, Miss Nora——"

But he was too late. She had seen down in the passageway the rope which lashed her father's door from the outside. She stared a moment and then turned to Stuart, her expression quite as blank when her eyes rested on his familiar face. "You have not taken that rope away," she said. "You said last night it was to prevent his coming out suddenly and being shocked by the sight of death."

Stuart floundered a moment despairingly. Useless as it might be to keep her in ignorance from hour to hour of what the tragedy of the night before really meant to her, he could not help making every effort to save her from that terrible knowledge as long as possible. He went to her at last and brought her back to her chair.

"I know that—that Berwind"—already the name was a blow upon an open wound—"gave him a sleeping-draught last night, after that attack of hysteria that we saw here in this room. He will sleep late to-day. And I hope before he wakes to have all the arrangements made for Berwind's burial so that he can be spared the painful ordeal of witnessing it."

"But if he does wake and finds himself fastened into his stateroom in that way?"

"I have slipped a little note under the door," lied Stuart, "explaining partially the necessity of keeping him a prisoner for an hour or two longer."

She continued to look gravely at him a little space. Then other things claimed her wondering attention. "You said Fong was making coffee—you didn't mean that surely?"

He was glad of the change of topic. "I do, indeed," he said, returning to his own place at table. "We are at last in the midst of excursions and alarms. The crew is on strike, my dear Miss Nora. I can't say that they have walked out, for that is just what they rigorously refuse to do. They are all huddled together in the forecastle talking of the curse of the Vatna."

"Huddled together!" she repeated. "After this?" She made a motion toward the corridor of Berwind's door.

Stuart instantly realized his mistake. Believing as she did that this murder had been done by a drink-maddened, mutinous crew, she found his description of their mental distress rather too subdued.

"When I say huddled, I am not speaking *ex cathedra*," he replied as lightly as he could. "I have not been to see them, certainly. I only know that all duties are suspended on board the *Blessed Damozel*. No watches watch, no cooks cook, and no bells bell!"

She faintly smiled at him. "They have taken strides these last two days," she said. "I am rather glad they have confined themselves, this morning, to their own quarters."

"We have the faithful Fong," said Stuart. "And you, I presume, have Katie?" He tried to ask the question naturally.

The girl's brows drew together, puzzled. "I rang twice for her, but she did not come. She may be helping Fong to get the coffee."

He did not gainsay her.

After she had taken her coffee and toast, she turned to him with her dreaded questions.

"What happened, then, after I went to bed? When did the clash come? Were you on deck? Were you together? Did my father know anything about it? Did the noise disturb him?"

"There was no noise, Miss Nora," replied Stuart in desperation. "I myself heard nothing."

"Not even the shot?"

"He was not shot," said Stuart slowly and after a faint pause. The ghastly picture of the murdered man as he lay upon the bed swam up before his eyes and sickened him. He knew that she was watching him with a look that never wavered.

"With what, then, was he killed?"

He was so loath to tell her that in the interval of his reluctance she repeated the question with more determination—

Digitized by Google

"With what, Mr. Stuart, was he killed?"

"A blow on the head," said Stuart finally —"a dreadful blow."

She shuddered, but her eyes never left his face. "With what weapon, then?"

He looked at her beseechingly. "Why should you ask?"

Her answer startled him beyond all poise. "Was it the silver bell?"

"How did you know?"

SHE closed her eyes and drew a long, uncertain breath. "I saw blood on it, there, last night when I came in. It was lying on the floor near him, and I was not sure but that perhaps you or—or he might just have touched it." She opened her eyes again after a silence, and their compelling look fastened again on his. "Then he was killed there in his own room —for the bell was there."

"Yes," said Stuart, "in his own room."

"And where were you?"

"I was on deck."

"On deck!" she echoed in surprise.

"I could not sleep," said Stuart simply. "I went on deck and walked about."

She got to her feet, drawing the same long, shuddering breath again, as if her lungs refused to give her air. She walked a little bit away and then came back to him. He stood at his place watching her, and he saw that a white change was coming in her face. "Why did you come down? How did you find it out if you heard no sound?"

"I overheard some plans discussed among the men. I wanted to consult with Berwind and tell him at once what I had heard."

"And you came down, without suspecting anything was wrong?"

"I came down, without suspecting anything was wrong."

The white change in her face was now very marked. It was remarkably intense, the expression that it stamped upon her eyes and lips. She had the look of a prisoner of war about to be shot. Again she turned away from him and again in a little space she came back. Her eyes had grown more gentle and more tender.

"You have told me that you heard the men talking, yet you heard nothing of poor Dr. Berwind's murder or you would not have come down here without a suspicion that anything was wrong. Moreover, you were on deck and you saw no one. You came down the companionway and you saw no one. Don't you see where my conclusions force me, Mr. Stuart? Don't you realize that it is far harder for me to go through all these trembling steps alone than it would be if we took them bravely together?"

Her eyes, so gentle and so brave, had never drawn him with so dear a light. "Tell me the truth—you see I understand. Was it—oh, was it my poor father who did this dreadful thing?"

"God help us, yes!" said Stuart, giving her the truth she asked for. She stood there very still and looked and looked and looked at him:

"God help us, yes!" she whispered, from her broken heart.

He only bent his head before her. She did not need, he felt certain, the expression of his sympathy and his understanding in any words. She herself, her hands clasped before her, stood as ever quietly and looked at him:

"We have a greater burden than ever to bear now, you and I. You must make our shares of it quite even—don't do me the injustice of taking the greater part upon yourself. Why should you? It is not manual labor that we shall have to do; it is nothing for which my lesser strength would unfit me. We are just two human creatures alone with a great deal to do—we must do it together, mustn't we?"

"It will be easier so," he said as he looked at her.

As she spoke, the unimpressionable Fong came back into the saloon and began to clear away the breakfast service. Stuart looked at him in an uneasy silence. Finally he said, "Miss Nora, if you would go away just now?"

Her face was full of a deep reproach. "Is this the way you share the burden with me, Mr. Stuart?" she asked quietly.

"I am going to bury Berwind," said Stuart simply.

"And I am coming with you," she replied, setting her face bravely toward the ordeal. "He was my friend and my father's. At home I should do no less. How much more should I do it here in this wilderness, where we are the only ones who can be with him in this last rite? What arrangements have you to make?"

"None but the very simplest," he re-

Digitized by Google

turned with an empty gesture. "Fong, will you please put down that tray? I am going to carry Dr. Berwind above. Will you help me?"

Fong Charley nodded gravely, setting aside his other work, as if the two were after all very much alike.

"Miss Nora, will you now please go above?"

With an acquiescent bend of her head, she turned toward the companionway. "Go to the stern starboard davits," said Stuart gently as she passed him. Again she bent her head in obedience, and in a moment more had passed silently up the stairs and was out of his sight.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE JOURNEY OVER THE ICE

TOGETHER Stuart and the Chinaman went to the closed door of Berwind's cabin and entered into the room of death. Full of a terrible suggestion of what lay hidden there within, the long, mummy-like tarpaulin-covered shape lay stiff and straight upon the bed.

As Stuart went toward it, motioning Fong to his place at the foot, his shoe struck against the silver bell and brought forth a dull, flat sound. In the moment, an unreasoning hatred of the insentient thing possessed him. Almost furiously he drew the porthole more widely open, and with a word like a monosyllabic sentence of death, he swung the great weight of the bell upward. Then, as his straining hands pushed it, it fell outward and crashed upon the ice. There it would lie until, with the passing of the ice, it would fall to a greater distance, gurgling down in the waters of the fiord to lie like the bell of the Inchcape Rock.

With tenderness and the greatest care they bore their stark burden upward on the turning stair and out into the freezing day.

Impassively obedient to Stuart's orders, Fong helped him attach the mummy-like burden to the davits. Reverently they lowered it down until it lay at rest upon the ice.

"Will you go down, Miss Lee? Fong, bring down that rope with you."

In silence they made their way down until they stood again beside their sad burden. Then Stuart took the rope from Fong and, kneeling bareheaded in the icy wind, knotted it at one end firmly to some of the thick marline that he had wound about the tarpaulin and which lifted the surface of the sailcloth itself above the ice.

Then he tied a couple of large loose knots at the other end and motioned Fong to take hold at one of these rough handles.

"We are going to draw him so across the ice, Miss Lee," said Stuart quietly. "There is no other way." She made a wordless movement of assent. Well did she understand that Berwind was in the hands of one best fitted and determined to do all that was humanly possible for him in his last hour on earth. They started forward upon the ice, Fong and Stuart drawing at the rope, when they were suddenly hailed in a raucous whisper from the yacht's deck.

Captain Healy, very much the worse for his night of debauch and terror, leaned a greenish face down toward them. His shifting, frightened eyes seemed to see quite as much behind him, over his shoulder, as of the group he thus pointedly bent down to interrogate. "Mr. Stuart—if you please, sir—one moment——"

Fearful of he knew not what new development, Stuart relinquished the rope to Fong Charley's sole hold, and with a word to Nora went back the few steps to the yacht's side. The face that he lifted to the Captain's mask of fear was frowning and impatient, yet withal anxious, too. What had persuaded the cowardly, drunken creature to leave his safety-bestowed forecastle to brave such possible damnation?

"What is it, Healy?" he snapped sharply.

"You goin' 'way?" The long sheep-face was more grotesque than ever to his way of thinking, with its look of nervous apprehension.

"Going away? Yes, I am going to bury Dr. Berwind."

"Not in the ice?"

"No. Is that all you want to say?"

"No, no!" The smitten man cast glance after glance over his shoulder. "'S the old man looney, sure enough? 'S he likely to come pyrootin' 'round while you're gone?"

Stuart could have flung a round curse at the man for his insufferable cowardice. "No!" he said contemptuously, turning about in disgust. "His door is fastened quite securely."

He regained his place beside Fong and took up his loosened handle of rope again, and they started on. The heavy body slid

Digitized by Google

lightly over the ice, but with strange hesitancies and precipitations. A ghoulish temper seemed to possess the thing, so that it swung from side to side and flung itself about with apparent lack of cause in a grisly playfulness. But the bearers walked steadily on, Fong because he had no imagination about such things, and Stuart because he had set himself to do this thing with as little harrowing of Nora's feelings as was humanly possible.

He wondered often why she put no query as to their destination. With her eyes on the gray, ashen ice and her step keeping bravely up with his, she walked beside Stuart and never spoke at all.

When at last they had drawn their tragic burden to the beach, Stuart loosened the rope that had served them for this purpose and coiled it into his pocket. He had already begun to learn the lesson of the desert-bound, that every simple thing has a value far beyond rubies when the need of it is felt in such a place. He signed Fong to lift the feet of the mummy, and he himself took the other end, turning his face forward that he might lead the way.

ALONG the beach that they had taken that day when the whole party had set forth in search of the forbidden treasure, they bore their unyielding burden, and Stuart's heart grew heavier and heavier at every step. He remembered the day well that had seen them on this trail before, he remembered every word that had been spoken of the place. When they reached at last the fissure in the rock, still brazening forth its fringe of blackened, blasted grain and steaming with the spiral smoke from the boiling sulphur pit, he stopped and, leaning forward with a sigh, set down the piteous freight. Fong bent with him and straightened, empty-handed, rubbing his weary arms and placidly looking about him at the wild, bare place.

"You are tired," said Nora Lee, half in question and half regretfully.

"We are going no farther," said Stuart, in reply.

"No farther?" She eyed the shingle at her feet with something like amazement in her face. "Not here, surely?"

"No. There."

She followed the direction of his pointing finger, into the steaming fissure of the tableland. Then as a sudden realization of his meaning came to her, she shrank close to him and hung upon his arm. "Oh, not in there!" she said in a horror-stricken whisper. "Not in there!"

He laid a hand over hers gently. "Believe me, it is the best way—truly the best. We can do nothing else in this cold-bound place; we could make no sepulture deep enough now to be permanent. And this, terrible as it may seem to you, is nothing, after all, that should revolt us. Perhaps you can remember that he spoke of it himself—how strange it is that such a thought should have come to him, is it not? He showed no horror of the place. He said it was a very perfect natural grave. As his medical mind suggested to him, it was very clean! Believe me, if you can, that I would far rather be buried here than in the usual ground, and believe, too, that he would agree with me if he could speak."

She loosed his arm and drew her self-control more closely about her as if it were a cloak the wind had disarranged. "You are right again," she said.

He turned away as she spoke and signed to Fong. They bent, lifted the body again and carried it toward the boiling pit. There they laid it down and Stuart went forward and looked in. The interminable bubbles rose and broke upon the creamy surface, its widening ripples filling the air with the pungent smell of the acrid mineral. In yellow masses the foam frothed and smoked about the rim.

When he turned back, he saw that Nora had knelt down beside the shapeless coffin and had bent her head above her clasping hands. His cap in his hand, he came and stood beside her, his head hanging down upon his breast. The Chinese boy, full of the reverence of his race for the outward expression of religious feeling, drew back in simple recognition of their need to be alone.

"Good-by, dear, faithful friend!" said Stuart quietly, his lips drawn tight with the sharp tension of his deep distress.

"It seems a cruel thing that he should lie so far from all his kin," she said softly, "and should be buried here so far from his own land."

"The whole earth itself seems very small to him now; we must remember that," said Stuart, looking down at the stark bundle of the tarpaulin. Easy, indeed, it was to realize that Berwind himself had left this shapeless garment of his clay behind.

Digitized by Google

"He was so very good," said Nora Lee, "so very brave and so unselfish. Do you think—" her look faltered up at him—"do you think it would be very presumptuous if we should pray for him?"

For answer, Stuart knelt on one knee near her and bent his head as her clear, tender voice began the prayer of prayers to that Father of all which is in heaven. Unfalteringly, yet tremulous with deep, pitiful feeling she said the rhythmic phrases of the beauteous supplication, and their voices sounded together at the last in an Amen.

It was a childish service for the dead, knowing no more moving appeal than just the childlike stretching of blind, trusting hands toward the Infinite. Yet no more fitting ceremony could have been used to mark the burial of the simple heart that lay still as a stone before their feet. He had been kindly without the hope of reward, good without fear of something after death, and pure in heart without a written creed. The prayer, with its total lack of dogma, its all-embracing humility, its unpretentious understanding of the too-often-lost relationship between the Father and the human child, and its immeasurably sweet perfection straight from the lips that were most worthy of all lips to pray, made the sad hour more beautifully bearable and filled the two hearts, that were left the lonelier for his going, with a sense of deep and absolute dependence upon a kinder justice than the world had ever known.

When she had risen to her feet with his slight aid he led her back gently to the shore, and with his own hands turned her face toward the sea. She stood obediently, staring off across the immeasurable waste of ice, yet vividly conscious of his receding steps—steps presently confused with others slowly shuffling in the difficult shingle toward the higher point. Under their feet the smooth stones rolled down and down with a clean, rippling sound. Then all sound ceased—no, was not that a faint word far behind her? She did not turn to look. In the silence of those moments she knew well what strange, heart-rending deed had wrung the exclamation of despair that was just a groan from Stuart's lips. She waited in the settled silence, cut by the rapidly rising northwest wind, keenly alive to what she could not see.

Steps sounded on the shingle once again behind her and Stuart joined her on the shore. His face was drawn and very colorless. Without a word he held out his hand to help her down upon the ice again. Without a word they set their now quite unretarded, unimpeded feet toward the *Blessed Damozel*.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE LOOTING OF THE YACHT

THE return across the ice was made in silence. And when they arrived at the motionless steps of the frost-bound yacht it was still without a word that Stuart turned to offer Nora the help of his hand. But she had come to a stand, and her face was white and there was a visible wavering in the hand that she lifted. "Hark!" she said.

Fong, as impassive as ever, halted behind them. Stuart, standing beside Nora, listened.

From the interior of the yacht came a roar, at first imperceptible in the clattering northwest wind which had so suddenly risen, but which the attentive ear resolved into the Babel of drunken voices. Then there came a wild shout, a rush of footsteps followed by the detonation of a thundering crash.

Nora clutched Stuart's arm. "What was that?" she whispered.

"Perhaps," he retorted grimly, "they are beginning to save us the trouble of getting rid of them by disposing of one another!"

Nora tried to smile, but she was visibly shaken. "But that was not one of the guns," she whispered; "it was an explosion! I wonder"—she was struck with a frightened thought—"is it possible they can have got hold of the giant powder or the dynamite?"

"Giant powder!" echoed Stuart, staring. Then: "Oh, yes," he said, "I do remember. Berwind had it in the surgery. Wasn't the place locked?"

"But, Mr. Stuart, my father!"

He knew better than she how little possibility there was of the crew, even thirty-odd men as they were, undertaking any process, even that of curiosity, against her father. As she started anxiously up the steps, he detained her momentarily. "Wait," he said. She turned, wide-eyed and panting, as he drew from his pocket a small object that glittered coldly as he held it toward her.

Digitized by Google

With a hand that trembled reluctantly she took the little shining instrument. "If need comes," she said in a low tone, "which means if—if you go first——"

Mark Stuart nodded. "We must face that possibility," he retorted quietly. "And now if you will wait here, I will go below and find out what has happened."

"And leave me here alone?"

He nodded shortly. "You are quite right," he said; "you are best with me."

Stuart, and Nora just behind him, came to a stand on the companionway. Nobody saw them.

In a confused swiftness which betrayed their underlying panic the men hurried to and fro. On the tables were stacked huge bundles hastily tied up in blankets and table-cloths. Some of these packs, as yet unsecured, showed a wild confusion of silverware and odd clothing, nautical instruments, and bottles of wine. One of the stokers, a little white-faced rat of a man, struggled valiantly with the large gilt mirror that hung over the buffet of the saloon. A couple of the engineers were busily opening champagne, in a corner to which the pack-makers ceaselessly returned. The floor was a litter of broken-glass and tumbled furnishings of every sort. On the forward wall, where the mahogany buffet had been, was a jagged and hollow space torn in the wall. The ruin of the safe gaped at them like a broken tooth. Healy, on his knees beside it, was occupying his unsteady hands with a large heap of packages of bank-notes and of paper-covered gold.

As Stuart took this in, Nora touched him on the arm. "Can you see my father's door?" she asked him.

He ran down the rest of the steps and went to a place where he could see down the passage. Far from offering him the slightest threats of capture or persecution, the little stoker, staggering with his mirror, ordered him breathlessly and blasphemously from his path.

Stuart returned to her. "He is quite safe," he said. "The rope is still there." He glanced into her face. "Are you afraid to be here? I think I could get you through that mob down to your stateroom, if you would rather."

"I would rather stay with you," she said quietly.

Healy, who had begun to divide the money into smaller piles, glanced up apparently to count his band of marauders, and caught sight of Nora and Stuart on the stairs. He nodded jauntily to them.

"Come on in," he said, and his voice showed that he was very drunk. "I invi' you to 'tend conf'rence of ship comp'ny, now sittin'. You both freely welcome. 'M'on in."

He went back to the counting of the money, drunkenly confusing what he had counted with what he hadn't. Levine stood watching him closely. He was drunk, too—there was not a man on the floor of the room who was not; but he intended to keep a close eye on his Captain until he himself was in possession of a satisfactory amount of the spoil. Sticking from one of his pockets was a flat, velvet case, one end blown to ruin, from which protruded the clasp of Nora's diamond collar. He turned to look at the two spectators on the stairs when Healy spoke to them; but, beyond throwing an insolent kiss to Nora, had paid them no further notice for the present.

THEN Healy lurched to his feet and rapped on the table with a half empty bottle of Veuve Clicquot. "Frien's," he called with a drunken assumption of authority—"Frien's and Mister Stuart!" The voices dwindled and ceased with a marvelous readiness. "Lis'en' me," he continued. "We're all ready, ain't we? Stores packed—each man's biscuit, bacon, whisky 'side any other articles he m' fancy?" He was quite drunk as to his enunciation, but apparently his wits had not deserted him. The men responded with an affirmative roar. Healy turned to the two on the companionway. "Y'ear that, Mi' Snora? Y'ear that, Mister Stuart? Start's made now—this minute. 'F you wan' come along, say the word. All frien's together. No har' feeling. 'F you wan' come along, say so."

Stuart stared at him incredulously.

"What are you thinking of, Captain Healy?" he asked quickly. "Surely you are not planning to try it overland to Reykjavik?"

"Aye, aye, that's it! We's goin' to git out o' dis—see? We don't 'appen to fahncy dyin' 'ere like rats in a trap, an' there y' 'ev' it, sir!" A chorus of voices lent their enforcement to Healy's words. Stuart turned back to Nora. Amazement was in her eyes.

Digitized by Google

Within his own mind Mark hardly knew what feeling predominated—horror at the helpless solitude which thus confronted Nora and himself, relief at the departure of these unruly rascals, whose presence was, after all, more of a menace than a stay, or—at the moment, strangest of all—a horrified pity for the ignorant wretches who thus lightly hurled themselves into the jaws of certain death.

Stuart raised his hand. Levine grinned at him. "'Ear, 'ear!" he shouted and the men listened.

"Captain Healy," said Stuart simply, "it becomes my plain duty, in ordinary humanity, to warn you that it is impossible. There are glaciers impossible to cross. There is a stretch of lava desert in the interior, where for one hundred and forty miles there is neither stream nor snow."

For a moment there was silence. The men glanced at one another. Suddenly Levine's voice broke the silence.

"'E'd rather 'ave us st'y 'ere, to work the ship f'r 'im an' 'is Liza Jyne!" observed the steward.

"Thash it!" Healy cried thickly. "Bill Levine hit nail on head. Very convenium for 'em, no doubt, have us stay and work ship fer'em. Take Mi' Snora, Mister Stuart back to port, say nothin'——" He stopped and his tipsy face contracted in a spasm. Then, with a hiccoughing laugh of bravado, he went on: "Say nothin' that lunatic lashed in there, bidin' time to bust out and murder 'sall!"

He paused, and an ominous hum, half protest and half mere shuddering breath, answered him from the men he addressed.

Svenson, his face as white as the flaxen hair that brushed about his ears, rose suddenly, lowering. He pointed trembling to the passage of the tied-up door. "T'e Berserker's rage haf entered into him—t'e vampire of t'e Nort'. T'e Berserker haf now t'e taste for blood. T'e Doctor, he is de't. Ve know how he is de't. Do ve stay here oursellufs dat t'e Berserker take us vun afterr t'e otter, first you, t'en Lefine, t'en t'e Captain and t'en me mine selluf, Lars Svenson?"

His voice sank to a whisper, which, for all the clatter of the wind without, gave not a word to be lost. In a pantomime of hideous realism, he pointed to each possible victim as the name fell from his lips. Healy's flushed face blanched to a mottled pallor. Levine wriggled behind his Captain. The men looked at one another.

O'Reilly, who had stopped on his knees beside the bundle he was tying, sprang up. "By the powers, Oi've hurd of ut!" he cried. "And Oi laughed at it, sittin' warrum by the foire with me grandfather! But *here*—who's goin' to laugh *here?*"

Healy, with an oath, suddenly dived at his loot.

"Stay!" he shouted hoarsely. "Stay here, each an' every one of you that fancies bein' dropped down into the mouth o' hell! As fer me, I strike overland within the half-hour. Who's with me?"

With fierce murmurs of acclamation, the men started forward. Packs were hastily tied, jackets donned. Healy himself wore Mr. Lee's fur coat, with two reefer jackets beneath. The little stoker staggered under the weight of his mirror. Each man, as he swung his bundle over his shoulder, came past Healy and received a share of the divided money. Some stopped to argue about it, but were impatiently pushed along by Healy and by those who came behind them.

Reeling under the impossible burdens which their cupidity had laid upon them, the men crowded up the companionway. Fear lay in their eyes and urged their footsteps on. Their exaggerated hopes of fortune were quenched in the panic that had taken possession of their souls. These men, who had flattered themselves as capable of becoming sea-adventurers, rascals on a grand scale, now beheld their own dazzling ambitions wrecked not only by the pitiless forces of nature about them, but by the invincible weakness which lay in their own souls.

As the men surged toward them, Stuart had drawn Nora nearer him and, speaking in her ear, had taken her before them up to the deck. "We will be out of their way," he said.

Then suddenly, Nora gave a little cry.

"Katie!" she said.

Stuart, who had hoped even against the evidence of his senses that the girl would prove faithful to her mistress in the end, if only from lack of courage to face the terrible march into the Vatna, turned miserably to look. Hiding herself, so far as possible, behind Healy's tall, fur-coated form, the pretty Irish maid was just in the act of stepping out upon the deck. As she saw

Digitized by Google

Nora she shrank back and her face flushed to a burning crimson. She was dressed out as for a Sunday afternoon walk in the park, in a display of her mistress's finery.

"Katie," cried Nora, "you'll never get to Reykjavik. You haven't one chance in a thousand of getting through that Vatna desert alive! Don't listen to what they tell you——"

Healy turned a sudden ugly look upon her. "Don't listen to me, you say to her! And who'd you hev her listen to, ef not to me? Very well, Katie, you're free to stay and git murdered ef you choose!"

Svenson, standing at the foot of the steps, turned his white face upward.

"You gum, Captain?" he cried impatiently, "Vy do ve go at all if we go not now? Do you vait for t'e door to be unlashed? Gum!"

Healy seized his bundle and lurched hurriedly down the steps. "'M'on Katie!" he cried again. And Katie turned away her face, down which the slow tears were running, and ran after the man of her choice. The pink streamers of her hood blew out in rosy confusion with the flying white ends of her stolen furs. Together the couple trudged across the ice toward the ravine at the head of the frozen fiord. Others of the crew, grotesque in costume and in their burdens, straggled after them.

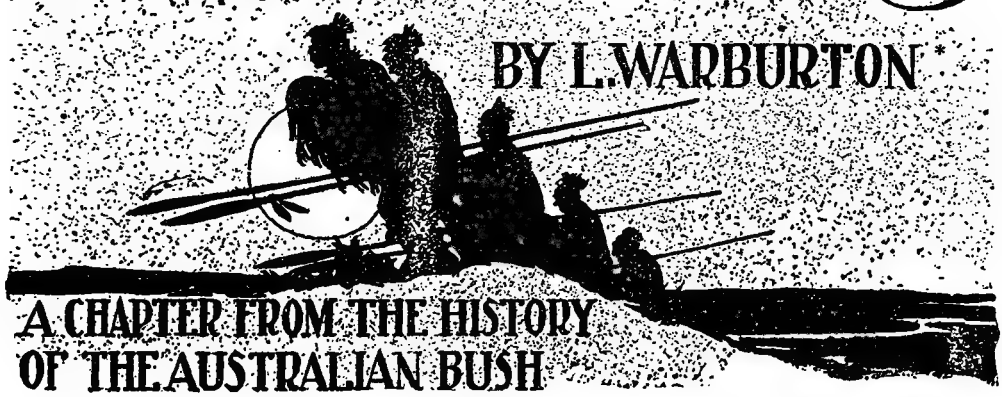
"Miss Lee," said Stuart, "shall we go below now?"

Nora bent her head in assent. It was in silence, unmolested, that they made their way down the disordered companionway.

TO BE CONTINUED

THE HEROISM OF JOHN ROMANES

BY L. WARBURTON *



A CHAPTER FROM THE HISTORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN BUSH

YOU will not find the name of John Romanes on the scroll of honor, for men win the badge of fame in many ways and there are many degrees of valor and many varying rewards won by its display.

"Peace has her heroes, no less renowned than war," is the assertion of the poet, but this must be qualified by the omission of the word "no." It is so at any rate in the case of John Romanes, for his deed was performed in the silence and solitude of the great Australian bush, without a single spectator who could bear witness to its exemplitude of courage of the highest quality, devotion seldom equaled, and a self-sacrifice so rare that few men unacquainted with the perils of the bush can appreciate it.

As the subject of Romanes' heroism it shall be my duty to tell to a wider circle of readers the events which earned for a hero no greater reward than my own undying gratitude and admiration.

IT SEEMS strange to me that, so far, few persons outside of Australia have ever heard of the stupendous efforts the Government of Western Australia has made to prevent the incursion of the rabbit-pest into

* See page 190

Digitized by Google

the farming and pastoral regions of that state and, as my story has to do with that mammoth work, I feel bound to speak briefly of it.

For over fifty years the rabbits, imported to Australia by some misguided immigrant, have been a fearful scourge to the eastern states of the Island Continent. Strangely enough they were never directly imported to Western Australia, or if they were, they failed to thrive and increase, but, once acclimatized and grown in numbers from a few solitary pairs to countless millions, the rabbits began a western migration and in the early nineties, just when the agricultural industries of Western Australia were starting, the unwelcome intelligence was conveyed to the Government, by a party of overlanders, that the rabbits were in thousands near the South Australian border and the advanced scouts of their invading army were even then on the soil of the western state.

It was only a matter of time when they would overrun the west as they had the east. The Government decided quickly and action was almost as prompt. Net fences had proved a success in the east and the Government at once entered on the stupendous task of running a rabbit-proof fence right across the country to act as a barrier to the invading hosts. That fence stands to-day, a completed and successful obstacle to the inroads of the pest. It is over 1,500 miles long, and stretches from Starvation Boat Harbor, in the Great Australian Bight, to Condon, in the Ninety Mile Beach, away in the tropic north. It cost the country over $1,500,000.

To maintain the barrier in a state of effectiveness against the depredations of the hostile natives, the blind attacks of emus and kangaroos and the ravages of flood, tornado and fire, a whole army of men are employed constantly patroling it. In certain parts of the state they have a comparatively easy time and face nothing more serious than the attacks of flies, heat and thirst and the "blues."

In the far north, however, where the fast disappearing bands of black aborigines are still in great numbers and are savage and treacherous, the boundary-riders always work in pairs. They have great hardships to encounter and great dangers to brave—consequently they are picked men and receive high wages. They go armed always, and in the spinifex country, with which my story is concerned, they are mounted on camels, because of the scarcity of water.

BORN of a sturdy race of pioneers, the bush always attracted me. I liked the open life and the strong, brave men whom I met there, engaged in the task of carrying public works and settlement to the outposts of civilization and yet always retreating before the advance of the progress their own efforts made possible. I was associated in the early days of the construction of the fence with the advanced survey party and, on the completion of the structure, was induced by the high pay to accept the position of Inspector of a length of fence in the far north. A "length" is the name given to a section of the fence which is patrolled or ridden by one boundary-rider, or two, as the case might be, but an inspector's "length" may consist, as in my case it did, of three ordinary lengths, a distance in this instance of close on three hundred miles. The inspector establishes a central depot where stores are kept, a decent well sunk and where the boundary-riders meet after working back along their lengths.

It was in April, 1908, that I left Separation Well, the southernmost point of my section of the fence and proceeded north to the De Grey River, a distance of 200 miles, where I had my main depot. There I was to meet Romanes and his mate Gregory, who had to patrol the last hundred miles of my territory. When I reached the depot, then in charge of two men who were kept there as a relief, I found Romanes in camp, with his mate, who was very ill with malaria and quite unfit to take the track for some time, although his condition was not serious. I was particularly anxious to see the northern section of my part of the fence, because there had been a tropical flood a week or two before and from some overlanding stockmen I had heard that the fence was in a bad state of repair.

When I questioned Romanes, whom I did not know very well—in fact I had entertained a suspicion of him from the moment the reports as to the state of his particular length came to me—he was rather nettled and challenged me to come out with him without delaying for the week's rest to which he was entitled after completing his out and back ride. The camels were in good fettle and I took Romanes at his word and decided that with him I should go out

Digitized by Google

two days later. This we did, taking with us the two best camels available for riding purposes and a third to carry our supplies for a fortnight's journey.

Before leaving the depot I asked both Romanes and the men in charge whether the natives were "bad" along the track and was assured by them that there had been no more than the usual trouble with the natives, who were persistently stealing wire and netting left at convenient intervals along the fence for repair purposes.

"None of the Kimberley blacks are in the district, I suppose?" was the question I asked of Romanes. The Kimberley tribes, I should mention, are among the worst of the Western Australian natives. They are a tall, muscular lot of fellows, but very treacherous. For years they had committed great havoc among the herds of the Kimberley cattle-kings, almost with impunity, and having successfully raided lonely out-stations and secured rifles and ammunition and having worsted small patrols of police in several encounters, they had become very bold. Whenever they entered the Gascoyne territory there was trouble, for they had a knack of stirring the comparatively quiet natives of that district into mischievous activity. In answer to my question Romanes said,

"Queensland Charlie, that 'boy' of Turnbull's at the De Grey Station, told me that 'Major' and 'Toby' were loose again and heading this way, but I don't believe it. They would make back into West Kimberley to dodge the police, and anyway, if they do get down here Turnbull tells me he had word that they are not armed. I don't reckon we'll see anything of 'em, boss."

"Well, I hope not," I said, "but we'll take some extra cartridges and keep a sharp lookout."

As events proved, my fears of trouble with the roving band under "Major" and "Toby," two escaped native prisoners and the worst characters that were ever loose, were better grounded than I knew, but when we set out one bright morning on our hot and dry journey, neither Romanes nor myself seriously expected to find the warlike blacks within a hundred miles of our tracks.

It took us eight days to make the one hundred miles of our outward journey, as we made a careful inspection of the fence, which I found to be in better shape than I expected, although we had to do a lot of strengthening to the temporary repairs which Romanes had effected on his previous trip. At the end of my section near Mt. Bruce we met the two boundary-riders who had worked south from the next section to the north. They had heard nothing of the movements of Major and Toby and reported everything quiet; in fact, they said it was the best trip they had had and that the natives, who usually kept close to the fence for the sake of the game of all kinds that was held up by the structure, had disappeared entirely.

As bushmen, well acquainted with the habits of the blacks, this circumstance alone should have appealed to us as suspicious, indicating that the natives were off on some *corroboree*, or council, but it did not strike us that way, and, feeling assured that all was right, we parted company next day, Romanes and myself proceeding on what should have been a six-day trip back and the other men returning north.

WE MADE a good day's march and camped at a rain-shed about eighteen miles out, just as it was getting dusk. Not a sign nor a sight of a native had either Romanes or myself seen. In fact, we had not given them a thought. I lit a fire of mulga sticks behind a clump of gidgie bush and was soon busily engaged on the task of making a "damper" or bread baked in the ashes. A flock of Nor' West parrots flew screeching overhead. Romanes hobbled the camels and turned them loose with their bells making a monotonous "*clamp-clamp*," as they went in search of young and tender spinifex bush.

"How would stewed parrot go, boss?" Romanes asked me as he looked after the rowdy birds, which had settled in a solitary gum tree a couple of hundred yards inside the fence.

"Pretty good," I replied. "Take the gun and bag a few."

Romanes picked up my double-barreled Greener gun, stuffed a couple of extra cartridges into his pocket, and was about to follow up the parrots when I advised him to take the Winchester too, saying that he might bring back the tail of a young kangaroo for soup. It was the best bit of advice I ever gave casually, and as Romanes walked away trailing the shotgun and carrying the rifle slung across his back, I little

Digitized by Google

realized that the extra weapon was to be the means of my salvation.

I lost sight of Romanes a minute later and went on with my preparations for our evening meal. The "damper" was made and I was just raking out the clean live coals of the fire on which to bake it, when I heard a rustle in the bush at my back. As I turned a spear whizzed by me and stuck quivering in the "grub-bag" of the camel saddle a few feet away!

At the same moment I saw half a dozen savages in all their war paint. I rose and literally threw myself at the nearest saddle against which a second Winchester rested. With that in my hand I could make a bolt and protect myself in a running fight. But that was not to be. A second spear, aimed with half a dozen others, went through my left wrist and, as I involuntarily dropped the rifle and grabbed at the spearshaft, a waddy descended on my head and my senses left me.

To this day I have never been able to explain to myself satisfactorily, why this moment was not the terminating one of my life. Unlike most savage tribes, the Australian natives know nothing of torture. They will not spare a prisoner, or an opponent, instant death, and the only good reason I can give for my escape from being clubbed to death, is that my captors believed I was already dead and their attention was too busily centered on the rifle and the camp outfit to worry much about me. So there I lay oblivious to subsequent events. What actually transpired from the moment I lost touch with mortal existence until I found myself again in the depot, I had to glean from the unwilling answers of Romanes to my questions, and fill in the blanks from my imagination.

When he left me to follow the parrots, Romanes did not anticipate going more than a quarter of a mile, at most, into the scrub and expected to be back in camp within fifteen minutes at the outside, but before he could get a shot at the birds they had led him on for a mile. It was while he was on his way back to the camp that he heard a shout, which resembled very closely the yell of triumph the natives give when they have captured their game, be it human or animal.

Approaching the camp cautiously, Romanes caught sight of the natives raiding the outfit, tearing open the "grub-bags" and generally making themselves acquainted with everything in the camel packs. He could at first see nothing of me because I lay where I had fallen under the pack to which I had sprung, but as the natives dragged the pack over to hunt for cartridges for the spare Winchester, he saw me lying, as he fully believed, dead. It would have been a perfectly natural and justifiable thing for Romanes to have left the scene at once and made for the nearest depot and when I asked him why he did not his only answer was:

"And leave you there to rot, and those devils to get away with my tricks? Not much!"

"But you could have done me no good by staying."

"I did, though," he replied with a smile.

Having "tumbled" to what had happened, Romanes' first thought was to open fire on the blacks and before the natives knew what had happened a double charge of parrot-shot struck them. With a yell they arose, the leader (whom it subsequently transpired was Major) grabbing the Winchester and firing wildly in the direction whence the shot had come. Romanes had taken shelter behind a bush which, while it obscured him from view, gave him no protection against bullets. He fired one shot from his rifle and, dashing from his cover, made for a tree a hundred yards away, the natives following in a body. Once behind a stout trunk he brought his rifle into play and emptied the magazine with such effect that three of the natives fell and the others, meeting such a stout foe, bolted into the bush after vainly hurling all their spears and spending what cartridges were in the captured Winchester.

NOT knowing how many natives there were, or whether there were more than he had seen in the neighborhood, Romanes wasted no time in climbing into the tree, there to wait until it was quite dark, when, as he knew, it would be safe for him to make a further move, as the superstitious nature of the blacks would prevent them from making any further attack. The Australian native, as a general rule, has a mortal dread of ghosts, "bunyips," or evil spirits, which he believes select the dead of night for their maneuvers, and once darkness comes on, he will stay quiet and await the dawn before he moves again.

Digitized by Google

When he had spent a couple of hours in his high perch Romanes quietly slipped down and approached the camp, for the main purpose of endeavoring to get a further supply of ammunition, and to secure one of the camels in order that he might get away from the dangerous locality as soon as he had collected anything of value which the natives had left. He expected to find me dead as a doornail and battered beyond recognition, but he got the shock of his life when he bent over me and found me breathing. There was a big wound on the back of my head and the first thing Romanes had to do was to stop the flow of blood and pack me up somehow out of the way of swarms of ants that already were busy at work.

The natives had stolen our water-bags, but, from the tanks nearby, Romanes secured water and tenderly bathed my wound, after which he broke the spear-shaft off and drew the barb out of my forearm. The only moment of consciousness I had, from the instant when I was knocked over until I found myself at Separation Well, was when the cool water touched my face and I had then only time enough to recognize the dirty, unshaven face of my comrade before I lapsed once more into insensibility.

Having made me as comfortable as possible, Romanes went in search of the camels, his idea being to strap me to one and get away without delay, for if the natives should return in the morning in increased numbers, neither of us would ever leave the spot. Poor John, he little knew then what a burden he had assumed in finding me alive! Better for him would it have been if I had really died then and he could have buried me, and, unhampered by a delirious man, have hastened to safety. His first disappointment came when he stood up to listen for the bells of the camels which should have been heard. He failed to catch the faintest tinkle.

His disappointment became alarm when not three hundred yards from the camp he found our pack camel dead, with several spears sticking in it, and the other two, fifty yards further on, hopelessly wounded. What he felt as he returned to the camp and wearily sat beside my still form, I can well imagine. He was up against a problem as stiff as any man ever had to face, if he wished to see his mate through. If he had not been made of the stuff that furnishes the heroes of this world, his own case was simple enough. He could have left me to die—and that event looked certain—and would have had nothing more than a hard and wearisome tramp to the depot.

His determination not to leave me placed him in this predicament: he had first of all to shift me to a place of safety before morning brought the natives on us again; and alone he had then to get me into the De Grey depot, a distance of nearly eighty miles, the best part of it over waterless country. It was impossible for me to move of my own initiative, for that had left me and I lay like a log, senseless, delirious. If my life was to be saved I had to be moved from the spot where I fell and be carried to a place of safety. That was the conclusion Romanes arrived at and before another dawn broke we were ten miles away from the scene of our last camp and I was safely resting in the shade of a bush, while Romanes went in search of water and food.

In the dark hours of the next night Romanes carried me another twelve miles and collapsed beside me near an old native well, from which he managed to secure a couple of pints of stagnant water, by bailing it with his hat. As he told me afterward, he had thought little of my light weight when he first set out with me, but at the end of his second stage he found that my weight had increased a ton and that I was the heaviest "swag" he had ever "humped."

How long into that day he slept, Romanes never knew, but when he awakened, probably as the result of my ravings, he saw a native coming along the fence scarcely two hundred yards away. His first thought was to shoot at sight, believing that the black must be one of our old enemies, but feeling certain that the black fellow could not have seen us in our retreat, he decided to wait till he came right up. The native was apparently following our tracks and was already turning off into the bush just where we had left the fence, when Romanes recognized him as a native he had seen at Turnbull's station.

"HULLO there!" he yelled. The black fellow stopped, saw the strange and dilapidated white man with a rifle in his hand and turned with a yell to bolt into the bush.

Romanes called to him to halt and at the same time used Turnbull's name, and dropped his rifle. At the familiar name and

Digitized by Google

seeing that he was not to be shot instanter, the native stood still while Romanes walked toward him and told him who he was. The black accepted the peace overtures and when Romanes learned that he was making for the De Grey Station with the news from an out-station that the warlike natives were about, Romanes decided to trust him and conducted him to where I was lying.

He inspected my wounds with many grunts and exclamations of concern. Doubtless he was duly impressed with the forcible way in which my rescuer told him of the fate which should and would befall those who were responsible for the mischief. He enthusiastically enrolled himself as a member of the rescue party and during that day stayed with us, keeping watch while Romanes slept again and, on his awaking, going for water and bringing a brace of rabbits from a trap in the fence about a mile off. These he cooked in his native way.

Having fed himself and Romanes, he made a native plaster for my wounds, composing it of leaves and sticking it on with wet clay, over which was bound the piece of shirtsleeve which Romanes had first used to staunch the blood. Then with a message to both the depot and his employer, asking them to hasten to our assistance and telling them where they would find us, dead or alive, the native was despatched by Romanes. He was told that he would receive a whole wagon-load of red shirts and tobacco if he brought them back inside of four days, but if he stopped during the night because of the fears of the evil, Romanes would set the "bunyips" after him and he would be withered and twisted like a dead snake.

Protesting that he would not crawl under a bush and hide, but that he would run all the night, the native went off at a trot that should take him over thirty miles before dawn. Romanes then picked me up again, and, footsore and exhausted as he was, carried me another nine miles to a rainshed, where he had determined to await with me for the arrival of help. That nine miles must have seemed ninety to Romanes, but he staggered on with his helpless burden. By nine next morning he had me dumped on a bed of leaves between the two tanks which offered protection from the sun and really formed a fairly well-provisioned fort where we could rest in comparative security against the possible attacks of hostile natives, or the worse attacks of thirst.

There for three whole days and nights we lay, myself in a high state of fever, happily oblivious to all that happened, and Romanes incessantly on the watch for blacks; tormented by heat, flies and lack of food, yet through it all, tenderly caring for the helpless human life he had made it his burden to save.

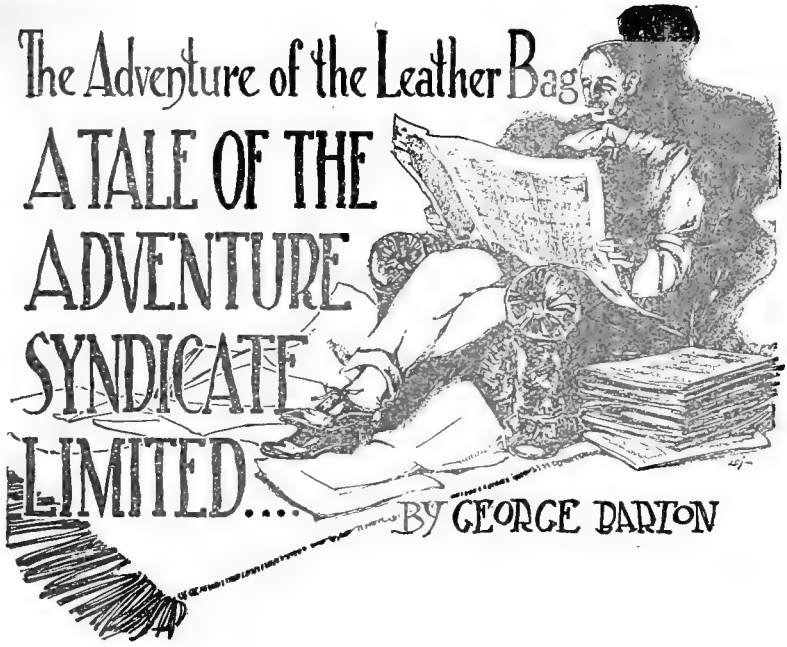
On the morning of the fourth day after our arrival at the shed, relief came. The black whom we had had the good fortune to fall in with had faithfully performed his task and had met with greater fortune than Romanes had looked for. He had fallen in with a party of Government surveyors about twenty miles from the De Grey depot and had brought them along at full speed with his graphic story of how we were held up by scores of savages and how I had died. When poor Romanes, by this time half-insane as the result of his hardships, realized that he actually saw white men and that the hordes of furious savages rushing on him were merely the creation of his bloodshot eyes, he broke down and wept.

Three days later I awoke to consciousness and found myself in comparative comfort at the De Grey depot, where the surveying party's cook—a first-rate amateur surgeon—had patched me up and doctored me in great style from the outfit's medicine-chest. I was still a helpless wreck, but my brain was clearing and when I realized where I was I asked about Romanes. They brought him to me and it was harder work for that brave fellow to answer my question as to how I got safe in from Mt. Bruce than it had been for him to carry me the best part of the journey.

It was a month before I was well enough to travel down to Geraldton and there convalesce, but before I left I had the satisfaction of knowing that Major and Toby had met with their inevitable fate. They had "stuck up" the Turkey Creek Station and, on being beaten off by the stockmen, ran into the arms of a police-patrol who killed many of the natives, including the ringleaders and captured the balance. When I was able to report to headquarters a further piece of intelligence pleased me. That was that my rescuer, John Romanes, had been promoted to the charge of an inspector's section and had been assigned to one of the best stretches of fence in the southern country.

Digitized by Google

The Adventure of the Leather Bag



A TALE OF THE ADVENTURE SYNDICATE LIMITED....

BY GEORGE BARTON

BARNES lay back in a big armchair in his Washington Square apartment, reading the Sunday papers. He puffed at the beloved stogie, pausing at intervals to address a casual remark to Forward and Clancy.*

He went through this modern literature rapidly, albeit with all-seeing eyes. He read the headlines of the news pages. He skipped the editorials and woman's section altogether. But he lingered over the financial page and became absorbed in the personal and small "ad." section.

Presently he reached for a pair of scissors and carefully cut a fragment from the personal column. It seemed to recall something, for he fished down among the discarded papers and, bringing up a news section, snipped a short article out of that. He calmly folded this clipping and put it away in his pocketbook. The personal he handed to Forward.

"How does that strike you?" he asked.

The lawyer read it carefully and was silent for some moments. The lines that made him stop to think were as follows:

One hundred dollars reward! Lost, between two and three o'clock yesterday afternoon, in a Twenty-third Street cross-town car, a lady's black hand-bag with monogram "L.R." on the outside. Contained twenty-five dollars in money, besides a number of personal articles of no value to any one except the owner. The above reward will be promptly paid and no questions asked if the bag and its contents are returned to its owner. Miss Richards, The Lafayette Apartments, West 69th Street, N. Y.

"Well," exclaimed Barnes cheerily, "I'm waiting. What do you think of it?"

"It's too deep for me," replied Forward, scratching his head in a perplexed way. "Why should the young woman pay a hundred dollars for a bag containing only twenty-five?"

Barnes laughed. "That's the eat in the coconut. If it were not for that, it might have gone, with ten thousand other personals, into the limbo of forgetfulness."

"Still," persisted the lawyer, "I don't see that we have any interest in it."

"Forward!" exclaimed the old man, with a note of playful censure. "You pretend to be eager for adventure and you won't grab it when it is whisked beneath your nose!"

"What are you going to do about it?" chimed in Clancy, ever ready to head off superfluous conversation.

* Bromley Barnes, formerly chief of a detective bureau, his faithful factotum Cornelius Clancy, and his lawyer friend Forward have for their amusement formed "The Adventure Syndicate, Limited," to give Barnes a chance to prove that even present-day New York abounds in mystery, romance and adventure.—THE EDITOR.

Digitized by Google

"Do?" echoed the Chief. "I'm going to call on the lady and present her with a leather bag."

"*The* leather bag?" questioned the sharp-witted Irishman.

"I said *a* leather bag!"

"Have you got one?"

"I'll get one at a department store for a dollar."

"And that——"

"That," interrupted the old man, "will be the entering wedge into the mystery that lurks behind the queer personal."

THE next morning at nine o'clock Barnes tapped on a door in the Lafayette apartments.

"Come in," said a very musical voice.

On being shown in, he was confronted by an exceedingly attractive young woman. She gave him a welcoming smile, but behind the smile there was an air of very evident perturbation.

"Miss Richards, I believe?"

She looked at him from a pair of winsome eyes.

"Yes, sir; what can I do for you?"

"I came to see about the advertisement of the leather bag."

Her eyes sparkled.

"Oh, you've got my bag!" she exclaimed.

"I've got *a* bag," replied the Chief, feeling a bit sheepish at the rôle he was playing.

"Let me see it," she cried; "I can tell you at once whether it belongs to me."

The old man shook his head sadly.

"I can't do that, Miss Richards. I'm afraid we'll have to reverse the method of procedure. I suggest that you describe in detail the articles that were in the leather bag."

She fell into the trap without the shadow of a suspicion.

"Why, yes, there was twenty-five dollars in bank notes."

"I know about the notes. What else?"

She puckered up her pretty mouth.

"Well, there was a lace handkerchief, fifty visiting cards with my name and address. Surely that should be enough——"

"Yes, yes, but what else?"

"Two department store coins, a box of capsules and a latch-key."

"I see—how did you get the capsules?"

"With a prescription, of course."

"For yourself?"

"Sir!" she said, drawing herself up to her full height, which was not very high, "what do you mean by this cross-examination? If you have my bag, deliver it; if not——"

Barnes held up his hand in that authoritative way which he knew so well how to employ. It had the desired effect. It halted the torrent of angry words.

"You must know, Miss Richards," he said soothingly, "that I am asking these questions for your benefit."

"For my benefit?"

"Exactly. You wouldn't want me to give the bag to the wrong person?"

"Certainly not!"

"Of course not," said the old man craftily. "Now, you said the capsules were prescribed by Dr. Smith?"

"I didn't say anything of the kind. They were prescribed by Dr. Ramsey."

"So they were," chattered the Chief, hastily gliding over this thin ice. "Now, are you sure you didn't have anything else in the bag?"

"Why, there was one other thing. A little silver purse containing probably a dollar in small change."

"Where were you coming from when you lost the bag?"

Her eyes snapped. Her patience was clearly exhausted.

"That does not concern you!" she cried.

Barnes reached over and picked up his hat. He bowed smilingly to Miss Richards. "The bag that I have in my possession," he said, "does not answer the description you have given me."

She stamped her foot angrily.

"How dare you come and trifle with me in this manner!"

The Chief looked at her gravely.

"Miss Richards," he said, "I'm not trifling with you. This is very serious business. You have been more or less frank with me. The time may come when you will need a friend. When that time comes you may depend on me!"

He left her standing there with a look of amazement and terror in her winsome eyes. At the foot of the stairs he met Clancy.

"My boy," he said, "I want you to watch this place. All sorts of people with all sorts of bags will come in response to that personal. One of them will have the right bag. If you can, find out which one it is and pump him. All I want is an answer to one question. Ask him how many

Digitized by Google

capsules were used out of the box in Miss Richards' leather bag. That's all."

Whereupon the old man and Forward went to the Maritime Exchange where, for the next ten minutes, Barnes was buried in a maze of tables relating to the arrival and departure of steamers. He frequently consulted with the officials of the Exchange. Presently he turned to the lawyer with a look of triumph.

"Forward, I want you to go down to the foot of Twenty-third Street, or a little this side of it, and board the *Hawk*, a steamer that arrived from Liverpool on Saturday afternoon. Find out if the ship's doctor is named Ramsey; also whether he prescribed for a Miss Richards on the way over. If possible, get a copy of the prescription. I want to verify a statement that has been made to me."

AS THE clocks were striking six that evening two men collided in front of the Washington Square apartments. Both were absorbed in thought and the shock brought them to their senses suddenly. A fight seemed imminent, when Clancy and Forward, looking up at the same moment, recognized each other.

"I've met with big success," exclaimed Clancy exultingly, "and I could hardly get here quick enough to tell the old man."

"Same here," spluttered the lawyer.

Barnes was delighted, a few moments later, to have his lieutenants report so promptly.

"I've little to say," announced Clancy, chuckling, "except that Miss Richards has recovered her leather bag."

"That's a good deal," vouchsafed the old man. "Who returned it?"

"A conductor of one of the cross-town cars. He came there in cap and uniform. He picked the bag up from the seat where Miss Richards had left it. I judged from his beaming face that he was the finder; so as he came away I stopped him. On my asking him about the contents of the bag he was surly at first and was going to refuse, when I reminded him that he could be reported for not turning in the leather bag to the office of the company as the rules provide. He wilted at that and told me all I wanted to know. He said that none of the capsules in the box had been taken."

"Good for you, Clancy!" ejaculated the old man.

"There's another thing."

"What is it?"

"Miss Richards has made an engagement to meet Dr. Ramsey at the Hotel Montgomery at eight o'clock."

Barnes whistled softly.

"I wonder why Ramsey didn't go to meet Miss Richards?"

"He's afraid. He thinks he's being shadowed."

"How did you discover all of this?"

"The messenger boy that brought the letter was good enough to let me deliver it."

"Did Miss Richards seem pleased?"

"No, she was very much scared. She cried, but after a while, wiped her eyes and told me to tell Dr. Ramsey that she would be there."

"And did you?"

Clancy grinned.

"No; I left that job to the regular messenger boy."

"Will he deliver it?"

"Sure; he's to be paid at the other end. Besides, I gave him a half-dollar."

Barnes' face glowed with delight. He turned to the lawyer.

"Well, Forward?"

"Your speculations proved correct. Dr. James J. Ramsey is the ship's doctor. He's been with the boat on its last four trips across. He prescribed for Miss Richards two days before the boat landed. It seems that she suffered from an acute attack of indigestion."

"How do you know?"

"From the apothecary of the boat. He showed me the prescription. He knows all about it for he filled it himself."

Barnes turned to the lawyer.

"You understand something about medicine; you've dabbled in Latin?"

"What I know about medicine wouldn't save a sick kitten. As for Latin—well, I know from Cæsar's Commentaries that all Gaul was divided into three parts."

The old man knitted his eyebrows and said impatiently, "What do you think of the prescription?"

"I should say—with all due allowances for what I don't know—that it would be a mighty good remedy for indigestion."

"Then it looks regular?"

"Entirely so."

Digitized by Google

LONG before eight o'clock the Chief and his right and left bowers were at the Hotel Montgomery. The proprietor greeted Barnes like a long-lost brother. The old man explained his mission in a few words.

"Why, I've reserved a table for Doctor Ramsey," said the boniface.

"Give us a place," said Barnes, "where we can see without being seen and I'll be your everlasting debtor."

They were shown to a table in a corner of the room, sheltered from observation by two large palm trees. Four or five feet away was a white-napkined table—the only vacant spot in the crowded dining-room. As eight o'clock struck they espied a woman speaking to the head-waiter. He escorted her, with many bows and much shrugging of the shoulders, to the unoccupied table. Miss Richards appeared to be very ill at ease. The wistful eyes glanced anxiously about the room.

"Not very gentlemanly to keep a lady waiting," muttered Barnes.

"He's probably coming in a round-about way," suggested Forward; "you know he thinks he's being shadowed."

"Clancy," said the old man, "I think we'll make you the outside sentinel for to-night."

The young Irishman accepted his cue and hurried out. From the side-table where they were seated, Barnes and Forward could look through a big plate-glass window and get a view of all the newcomers. Presently a taxicab drove up to the hotel and an alert young man jumped out. He hastened into the dining-room and slowly threaded his way down to the table where Laura Richards sat.

The young man was a bundle of nerves. He was tall and slim and wiry. His brown eyes flashed like tongues of flame. He summoned a waiter and greeted Laura Richards in such rapid succession that the two sentences appeared simultaneous.

"What shall I order for you?" asked Dr. Ramsey.

"Nothing," she said emphatically, the blood mounting to her cheeks. "I've humiliated myself sufficiently in coming here to meet you."

"Just a bite for the sake of appearances?" he suggested.

"Not if I were starving," she exclaimed, with suppressed emotion.

"Oh, very well," he answered. "Did you bring the box with you?"

"Did you bring the letter?"

"I did."

"Let me have it."

He reached in his coat-pocket and brought forth a folded letter. His manner was indifferent enough, but Barnes noticed that he retained a firm grip on the end of the note paper.

"Here's your letter," he said. "Now let me have the box and we'll call it quits."

She produced her leather bag and, diving into it, drew out a small pasteboard box such as is commonly used by druggists.

"Forward," whispered the old man, "this is the time your Uncle Dudley plays the part of a highway robber."

Dr. Ramsey was handing the letter across the table and Miss Richards was passing the box in his direction. Barnes, who was making his way past their table, deliberately jolted her elbow. The unexpectedness of the blow loosened her hold on the frail thing and it fell to the floor at the feet of Forward. Instantly he stooped down to pick it up. But Ramsey was there before him, and, giving the lawyer a push, sent him sprawling on his hands and knees. At the same moment the physician grabbed the box and thrust it into his trousers' pocket. He snatched his hat and coat and made long strides toward the door of the café. The head waiter blocked the entrance.

"Your check? Your dinner?"

"Haven't time to wait; give the waiter some of this!"

And while the chief functionary of the dining-room was straining his eyes to discover the denomination of the bill that had been thrust into his hand, Ramsey had passed him and gained the sidewalk.

Inside, Barnes was struggling between his natural chagrin and an unexplainable desire to laugh. Forward scrambled to his feet very much flushed with the half-embarrassed and half-angry feeling that takes possession of the average mortal who slips on the ice before a crowd of grinning spectators.

"Follow me," whispered the Chief, "and bring Miss Richards with you."

With that he hurried out with the other two trailing after him. The whole business occurred so quickly that half the diners in the room failed to see it. The others, with the indifference of their kind, dismissed it

Digitized by Google

as one of the minor scandals that occur so often as to excite no comment.

Several taxicabs were lined along the curb outside the hotel, puffing and snorting as though anxious to be on their way. Ramsey recognized the one in which he had come. He jumped in, calling out an address. The chauffeur closed the door with a bang, hurried to his seat in front of the machine and whizzed away. Barnes groaned at the sight, but wasted no time in moping over his defeat. He thrust Miss Richards and Forward into a second taxicab, shouting to the driver.

"Follow that machine! Don't let it get out of your sight!"

THE chauffeur, with the restlessness of his tribe, glowed at the thought of a race. He let out full speed and the car went bounding after its red rival. Up one street and down another they rolled until the taxicab reached Fifth Avenue. By that time, the tail end of the first car was in plain sight. Barnes noted it with a grunt of satisfaction and turned to the frightened girl by his side.

"Miss Richards," he said, in a reassuring voice, "you must realize that the time has come to tell all you know."

The girl burst into tears.

"I'm only too anxious to relieve my mind," she cried brokenly. "I'm only too sorry that I permitted myself to get mixed up in such a dreadful business!"

"You know Dr. Ramsey?" the Chief asked.

"Slightly," she replied. "He attended the same medical college as my brother. He graduated last year and secured an appointment as ship's doctor with the Anglo-American Line. I never liked the man, but was civil with him on account of my brother. I went abroad this Summer to study. Returning, I happened to come over on the boat of which Dr. Ramsey is doctor. He was very friendly with me, but when we we were within two days of New York he said he had bad news for me."

"Bad news?" echoed Barnes.

"Yes; he said that Frank had written a very compromising letter, and that he had it in his possession. Naturally, I pleaded with him to give it to me or destroy it. Finally he relented and said that if I would do him a slight service he would give it to me on our arrival in New York."

"What was the service?" asked the Chief.

"He said he was going to prescribe for me. Amazed, I retorted that I was not ill. He laughed and said that he knew that, but would give me a prescription for indigestion. I was to have it filled and then give him the medicine. I protested at such a queer proceeding, but finally, for my brother's sake, yielded. I thought possibly it was some college prank. I took the prescription to the ship's druggist and it was put up in twenty-four capsules in the box you tried to get to-night.

"He took the medicine from me and locked himself in his cabin. Just before landing he gave it to me and said he would call to claim it at my apartments. I was to guard the capsules as I would my life and on no account to take any of them. As you know, I lost my leather bag containing the medicine in a Twenty-third Street car. It was by Ramsey's direction that I offered the $100 reward for its return. The rest you know."

"Where is the letter he gave you?" asked Barnes.

She handed the Chief the crumpled bit of paper. He smoothed it out and read it by the aid of the lamp in the cab. He gave an exclamation of disgust.

"Perfectly harmless," he said; "a boyish epistle making fun of his teachers."

Miss Richards groaned.

"And to think that I've put myself in this predicament for nothing!"

"It's all right," was the soothing response, "I'll hold you harmless, but," with a click of his teeth, "I'd just like to catch that playful doctor!"

Barnes poked his head out of the window. They were at the very rear of the red car. To his surprise, it was headed for his Washington Square apartment. Ramsey was gesticulating wildly and telling the chauffeur that he was going in the wrong direction. But the driver was not paying the slightest attention to his protests.

The two taxicabs reached the curb at the same moment. Ramsey jumped out, but instantly Barnes had the physician by the scruff of the neck. The infuriated man shook his fist at the driver of the car. A musical laugh was the only response. Something about the tone of that voice caused the old man to look up. He gave a cry of delight.

"Clancy!"

Digitized by Google

Ramsey made an effort to get away, but Barnes pressed the cold muzzle of a revolver against his cheek and he became as resistless as a babe.

"Straight up the stairway to my rooms!" commanded the detective.

THE queer procession filed into the familiar apartments and, while Forward was looking after the comfort of Miss Richards and Clancy was devoting his attention to the prisoner, Barnes was at the telephone. He got a quick response.

"Is that you, Williams?—This is Barnes—Come to my rooms at once.—What?—Yes."

In a short time a tall, official-looking person had arrived and was greeting the old man warmly. Barnes turned to the detained physician.

"Dr. Ramsey," he said, "I want to present you to Mr. Williams, Chief of the Customs Service."

Ramsey had stood up at the first words of the detective. At the conclusion of the sentence his legs gave way beneath him like a pair of worn-out hinges."

The customs officer, who had been whispering with Barnes, turned to the prisoner briskly.

"Now, Doctor, I'll take that box of capsules."

Ramsey gave a backward movement of the arm and was about to toss the box out of the window, when Clancy, reaching out, grasped his hand and wrenched the box from him.

He handed it to the customs officer, who promptly emptied the capsules on the table in the center of the apartment. Then he calmly and carefully proceeded to take the capsules apart. Every one in the room watched him with breathless interest as he extracted a beautiful pearl from each one of the coverings.

"Part of the Dillington pearl necklace!" he gasped.

"Yes," assented the Chief, "it will be, after those pearls are strung together by a good jeweler."

Williams gathered up the precious stones and summoned a plain-clothes man, whom he had stationed outside the door.

The Doctor was marched off in his custody.

"It seems a shame," said Barnes, "that such ingenuity should have to be punished."

"It would be more of a shame if we let it go unpunished," said the Customs Chief as he started for the door.

As Forward prepared to escort Miss Richards to her apartments, the old man turned to Clancy.

"What did it cost you to impersonate the chauffeur?"

"Not a cent—he's a friend of mine."

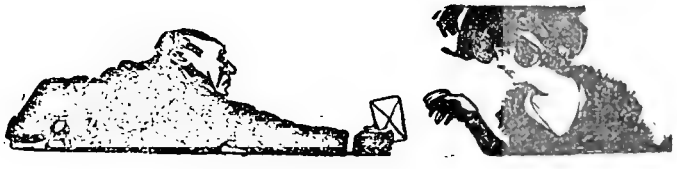
"You don't seem surprised at this climax?"

Clancy smiled in his elfish way.

"Why should I? When you cut out the personal concerning the leather bag, you also clipped another item from the paper."

"But I put that clipping in my pocketbook."

"Yes, but I bought another copy of the paper and found it concerned the story of the Dillington Pearl Necklace. The customs officers were all at sea over the strange smuggling case. I put two and two together and I knew that you would finally demonstrate that pearl necklaces were an infallible cure for indigestion."



Digitized by Google

THE HATE OF ISMAIL BEY

BY BERTRAM ATKEY.

SINCE nightfall the motor-boat had drifted silently through warm moonlight on a sea so satin-smooth that to Stella Carew it seemed almost impossible that this was the sea which eight hours before had reared itself into so ghastly a chaos of black bottomless gulfs and roaring abysses, smashed the propeller of the motor-boat and a hundred times seemed on the point of engulfing them. It was hardly less difficult to believe that a simple afternoon's motor-boating from Constantinople could end (or begin) in such unexpected fashion.

Her husband of a fortnight lay along the saturated cushions, drugged with fatigue, sleeping like one dead. Chief, the big bull terrier lay near him, his heavy head resting on his forepaws. She smiled a little as she turned to the sleeping man.

"An hour!" she said, with a sort of tender scorn and stretched out her hand to wake him. She had promised to wake him after he had slept an hour—four hours ago. But her hand checked midway and she peered out over the moonlit waste with a sudden interest in her eyes.

"That is land! Surely that is land!" she whispered. At the words the big bull terrier rose softly and looked toward the far-off dark blur that had just caught the girl's attention.

He threw up his nose, snuffing, and the girl felt the hair at his shoulders rise up stiffly.

"What is it, Chief?" asked the girl. The dog stood rigid, staring out across the water with a sort of deadly intent.

The girl patted him and reached out to his master. Carew sat up quickly.

"Anything wrong?" he asked.

"No. But there's land just ahead and Chief doesn't seem to like it."

"What's the matter, Chief?" He peered out, his arm around the girl. "The storm has made him nervous, I suppose. Stop it, old man! We're going to land there whether you like it or not." The growling died out.

"How long have I slept, dear?" asked the man. The girl smiled at him.

"Just over an hour," she said.

"Let me see." He took her hand and glanced at the watch at her wrist.

"Three hours over, to be exact," he said ruefully. "You should have waked me, Stella."

"Why? There was no danger. I slept nearly all the time. What land is it, do you think?" she added, a tinge of anxiety in her voice.

"Oh, probably a desert island," he said. "We shall have to settle down like Robinson Crusoe until a ship takes us off. We're drifting very quickly; there's a strong current. In an hour we ought to be ashore."

It was just as the edge of dawn lightened the horizon that the boat drifted into a little bay and grounded softly on a sandy beach.

"Here we are!" said Carew. "And thank heaven for dry land again! Will you——! What's the matter, you old idiot?" He turned to the bull terrier, which had jumped out of the boat, splashed through a few feet of water to the beach and

Digitized by Google

now had turned facing them, snarling, threatening.

"He doesn't want us to land," said the girl.

Carew nodded, looking puzzled.

"I suppose so," he agreed. "But we can't go drifting about without a propeller. We must land. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't. If it's the mainland, we can't come to any desperate harm, and if it's an island we shall be taken off within twenty-four hours." He stepped over the side. The dog menaced him reluctantly.

"Don't be an idiot, Chief," he said. The bull terrier, presumably accepting the inevitable, backed away, with a slightly sheepish air.

"Give me the rifle, dear, and the box of cartridges." He took them from the girl and, putting them on the sand, lifted her from the boat and carried her to the beach.

"Saved!" he said, with a mock dramatic swing of his arms. "Only Chief has lost his reason," he added, as the bull terrier wheeled suddenly, staring at the woods inland, and growled venomously.

The girl laughed a little uneasily.

"Chief doesn't like the island," she said, and added suddenly: "Neither do I, Jack, and I'm glad you've got the rifle."

He looked at the weapon. It was a .22 caliber Winchester, kept on his motor-boat for practising at gulls or porpoises.

"Oh, well, it will do to bring down a bird or so if we have to stay here any length of time. Are you hungry?"

She shook her head absently.

"Listen!" she said. The growling of the bull terrier had taken on a savage note; he stood well in front of them, his head held low and thrust out flatly. He was glaring out at the trees, even in the dim light they could see the twitches and tremblings of rage that seized him spasmodically.

THEN suddenly a discordant medley of yells echoed out from the dark woods and, an instant after, a lean shape raced out from the shadows of the trees and tore across the sand toward the sea, screaming. It was a dog and, yelling on his very heels, came a swarm of his own kind, like a pack of hounds running into their fox.

Carew seized the bull terrier.

"Hold him, Stella!" he said. The girl gripped his collar and Carew pumped a cartridge into the chamber of the Winchester.

"Get back into the boat!" he said. Even as he spoke the leader of the pursuing pack sprang at the fleeing dog and the horde poured over them. There was a wild snarling flurry on the sands, a horrible worrying sound and the living vortex broke up, each dog suspiciously backing from his neighbor with bared, ready teeth.

From the motor-boat Chief literally moaned with desire to be at them.

But the eyes of the girl were fastened on a dark smear on the sands—the place where the fleeing dog had gone down.

"They *ate* him!" she gasped, her face white as pearl in the dawn-light.

Carew nodded grimly.

"The brutes are mad with hunger," he said. "Now I know why Chief did not like the place. This is one of the islands they send the scavenger dogs of Constantinople to—to eat each other or starve. We can't land here!"

He poled the boat away from the beach into deeper water, as one by one the gaunt, slavering brutes trotted up to the edge of the sands, whining like wolves. Even in the growing daylight their eyes shone with a mad, greenish glare; foam dropped from their jaws, and their ribs stood out like the ribs of an age-old wreck that has almost rotted away.

"We can't land here," said Carew anxiously. "There are swarms of them. They'd pull us down!"

A cold chill nipped his ears from behind and he turned, looking seaward. His face blanched.

"My God, Stella! We *must* land! Look!" He pointed to a long white line a mile out to sea—a line of livid writhing water that rolled furiously toward them.

"What is it, Jack?"

"A squall! We shall be flung ashore in three minutes!"

He loosed the dog.

"Good-by, Chief. Give it to 'em!" he said and slid the rifle to his shoulder.

The living skeletons on the beach lined up to receive the bull terrier, watching him with hungry eyes as he swam in to them. Then the Winchester snapped sharply and one of them reeled and dropped with a howl. In an instant he was buried under the struggling heap of the brutes. Carew sent bullet after bullet into the middle of the snarling, snapping group, and then Chief tore himself out of the water with a

Digitized by Google

sort of muffled bellow. A score of them lurched to meet him, and the girl in the boat shut her eyes. Behind them the roar of the oncoming squall rose louder and louder, mingling horribly with the fearful sounds from the fighting beasts ashore. Then, suddenly, some one shouted from the edge of the woods behind the dogs.

A man was running down the beach toward the animals, shouting as he ran. Round his head he seemed to be whirling a brazier of flaming coals.

The dogs scattered sullenly at his approach, cringing back from the blazing iron basket the newcomer swung at them.

Sharp yelps of sudden agony rose and in a few seconds the pack broke and skulked, sullenly snarling over their shoulders, into the woods—all save four who lay twisting on the sands near the bull terrier, and one who could not retreat because of the fangs of the fighting-dog at his throat.

The man with the brazier—a weird, bearded savage, clothed in rags and skins—shouted: "Quick! Come ashore!"

Hardly were the two over the side before the wind was upon them—solid as a wall it seemed, and bitter cold. A little behind rolled that hissing line of broken water. The wind lifted them literally and hurled them across the beach. The man with the brazier was flicked back into the woods like a dead leaf.

Then the white water broke up over the shoals in foam and thunder, roaring up the sand to the foot of the trees, whipped, tossed, seemed to hang and presently, foot by foot, sank back to its level with a loud, long-drawn sigh, as of some great beast reluctantly quitting its quarry at the very moment of its kill.

The wind seemed to relinquish its throttling giant's grasp on the bending trees and passed on through the wood, riotous, like the rear-guard of a triumphant army, sated with success, extravagant with loot.

The three looked into one another's eyes—one a wild man of the early ages, half-naked; two people of these days, in white Summer clothes and fine linen.

"Come," said the man with the brazier, "before they return—my fire has nearly burnt out!"

He turned and ran through the woods, his skins flapping about him.

They followed and a scarlet bull terrier padded after them, snarling discontentedly as he went.

II

SO THEY ran for nearly a mile, twisting and winding along an intricate and complex path through the gloom and silence of the woods. Then the girl faltered, despite the assistance of her husband, and stopped.

"Oh, I can run no more!" she gasped, and allowed herself to go lax in his arms. He supported her, calling desperately after the man in skins. He could feel her heart pounding against his. The thought of the dogs turned him cold with dread for her.

The man ran back, padding swiftly like one more accustomed to running than to walking.

"We can walk now," he said. "It is here."

Fifty yards farther on he stopped at the foot of an enormous tree up the trunk of which was a rope ladder.

"Up!" said the man with the brazier. He climbed the ladder like a cat. The others followed cautiously, up and up until the ground below was hidden by huge branches, thick with foliage. They arrived at a platform of rough poles upon which was fastened a hut of old planking, branches, sailcloth and rough basket-work, the whole nailed and roped on to the twisting boughs of the big tree so carefully and in such detail as to be entirely rigid.

There was a plank sleeping-bench along one wall, a number of small packing-cases along another, a rough table, obviously home-made, occupied the middle of the hut and at the end smoldered a small fire of embers. A scimitar hung on one wall. There were only three sides to the hut, the space where the fourth should have been forming the entrance from the platform. This entrance could be closed by a big hanging square of sailcloth now held back by a loop of rope.

Stella Carew's eyes opened a little as she observed the many signs that this strange eyrie had been inhabited for a long time. She sat on one of the packing-cases, recovering breath after her wild race through the forest.

Carew began to thank the man who had become their host, but he put up his hand in a humble gesture.

Digitized by Google

"I have not seen a white man for twenty years," he said in English. His voice was the voice of an educated and well-bred man.

"This is a great day in my life!" He added a few chips of wood to the tiny fire.

"A greater day in ours!" said Mrs. Carew. "But for you we should be dead."

The man in the garb of a savage turned to her, bowing almost reverently.

"The dogs were afraid of my fire," he said. "It was the only thing they feared at first, but now they are beginning to fear me for myself also. They *know*. I kill them!"

He brought a few little cakes made of flour and water, and some little baked fish from a kind of store cupboard and placed them on the table. He spread a square of sailcloth, washed soft, for the table. There were plates of polished wood, and knives and forks very skilfully carved from hard wood. Finally he produced a bottle of water.

"I try to be decent," he said absently, as though he had said it a thousand times before to himself. "I must consider my self-respect." They noticed that his hands trembled a little as he anxiously smoothed out the cloth and put the things straight. Suddenly it occurred to them both that this was nearly an old man who had given them shelter.

At last he looked up from his preparations and bowed again to the girl.

"You will eat?" he asked, dragging a packing-case up for her.

They were hardly seated before a vengeful snarling jarred across to them. Chief, the bull terrier, was leaning far out over the platform glaring down through the foliage of the big tree.

Stella paled a little.

"The dogs!" she said. "They lost no time in tracking us here."

The old man smiled.

"Disregard the animals, madam," he said. "They can do nothing. They know the Dwelling Tree—that is my name for this place—and they come here often to howl. But there is no fear—no danger."

He brought fish around to her as though he were serving a goddess.

"And the little cakes, madam, you will partake of the little cakes also? They are very simple, but they are good. I have not tasted bread for so long that I have come to prefer the cakes that I make."

He watched them eat, with a sort of simple pleasure that was vaguely touching. They finished their fish and it was with absolute sincerity that Stella declared she had never tasted fish more delicately broiled. His eyes lighted up at that.

"One tries to improve, always to improve. To occupy oneself without cessation, endeavoring always to improve, is sanity. Idleness is madness. I used to say to myself, 'Forrester, you are a dreamer. Look at this fish that you have cooked. It is burnt on this side, it is raw on this. Carelessness! You have been dreaming again, of Paris, of London, of New York, of home! Concentrate! Concentrate! *Home* is here until you escape. Five, ten, fifteen years ago. So I have kept my mind upon these things. And now I can cook fish and cakes. And I can catch fish and birds and run and climb and carve wood and—kill dogs. and they have kept me quite sane, you see. All that I have learned in twenty years, those little things!"

He looked at them under shaggy eyebrows, wistfully.

"They kept me very sane and human," he repeated. He looked toward Stella, strangely like a child expecting praise.

INDEED, they have!" she said with a little sob at the pity of it. "I think you have been wonderful!"

He bowed humbly.

"Then, too, there were the dogs——" he broke off suddenly, as the sound of angry yelping came up to them from the foot of the tree, and strode to the platform. He leaned over, shouting down to them, in Turkish.

"Ah! scavengers, be silent!" There was a sudden uncanny silence and the old man came back to his guests.

"The dogs," he continued. "They swept Constantinople clear of them two years ago. Some were killed and some were sent to the islands. But it was to this island they sent the most—the island of Ismail Bey. He knew I was here upon this island and he over-ran it with the starving dog-scavengers of Constantinople!"

The old man stared at them. "And soon now he will come to see with his own eyes how they have dealt with me. Well," his face was suddenly triumphant, "they were a thousand strong and now they are no more than two hundred. And the woods

Digitized by Google

are full of gnawed and splintered bones, for their comrades deal with them after I have taken them. And it is not ended. I have a new trap—a new trap to kill them like flies. They were sent to prey upon me, but I have preyed upon *them!* Truly Ismail Bey shall see for himself when he comes again. When the dogs first came they were hungry only a little. I was living in a cave down by the shore then. But I saw, for I had kept my sanity, that soon they would be demons, raging through the islands for food.

"At first I could beat them off with a stick, but I knew it was folly to sleep anywhere on the ground. So I left the shore and took to the woods, building this dwelling in the trees. And I was not one hour too soon. I transported my goods from the cave to the tree, making many journeys. The last journey was for the brazier I had made of the hoop-iron from barrels that had been washed up ashore.

"As I went to the cave the dogs followed me at a distance, gaunt and whining. It was growing dark and they were bold in the darkness. They followed me up to the very mouth of my cave and I saw that they would pull me down when I dared to come out again. I sat in the cave and, being unstrung, I wept.

"If Ismail Bey could have seen me then, that would have pleased him. Twice I broke off from my weeping to beat the head of one dog, bolder or hungrier than the others, which edged into the cave. And then, as I was dropping wood on the fire in my brazier, I remembered that all beasts fear fire and I knew that it was all well.

"Very carefully I removed the legs of the brazier and built a blazing fire in it. I fixed the legs across the top like latticework, fastened a chain to the top bars of the brazier and, swinging the brazier by the chain, I stepped out among the scavengers. They surrounded me instantly, but I swung my fire around in a circle. Many were burned a little and they fell back, afraid, so that I came safely back to my tree once more, well attended at a distance by the scavengers.

"Then, for employment and for distraction, I declared war upon them and, one by one, in many ways, I wiped them out. I dug staked pits. I squeezed sharp poisons from berries. I built dead-falls to break their backs. I used the scimitar and the dagger I found rusting among the ruins of the pavilion on the other side of the island. I poisoned arrows for them and twisted rope nooses into cunning springs. And one by one they fell to me. And they have come to *know.*

"I can walk from one side of the island to the other side in safety with my fire. They will howl and follow, but they will dare nothing more. But *you* they would pull down like a deer. It has been good for me—it has kept me occupied and therefore sane. Some day Ismail Bey will come, in the hope of seeing my bones, perhaps, but he will find only the bones of his dogs!"

He ceased, staring absently at the floor, lost in thought.

III

STELLA CAREW was not sure that she understood. It was all so unexpected. Even in Turkey one does not look to encounter adventures of this kind nowadays. The storm that had disabled their motor-boat and blown them leagues out to sea, had, in itself, been a new adventure to the girl. And when the adventure had culminated in the discovery of a marooned man who had dwelt for twenty years on an island presumably of some vindictive and powerful Turk, she was not able to grasp it instantly.

Yet the tale had been pitiful and the existence of the dogs proved its truth.

She signed her husband to silence, as she leaned to the old man.

"You have been wonderful!" she said. "To have fought as you have done, to have conquered the madness, to have so kept your self-respect and to have beaten those dreadful dogs! But why? Why have you submitted to remain on the island for all these years? What power has Ismail Bey to keep you here? What and who is Ismail Bey to hold a foreigner prisoner as he has done?"

Her anger reflected itself in her voice and tone until her husband looked at her in surprise. She had always been so sweet that he had not guessed the passionate capacity for revolt against injustice and cruelty which lay deep down in her heart as in the heart of every woman.

The old man bowed, with the peculiar humility which can result only from ill-

Digitized by Google

treatment carried to the verge of the breaking of one's spirit.

"Ismail Bey is my enemy," he answered. "I will tell you everything, madam. Twenty years ago I was an attaché at the United States Embassy at Constantinople. There was a lady—the daughter of a wealthy Englishman who owned very great interests in Turkey. I loved her, but her love was all for some one at home. So we were friends—good friends. Ismail Bey, who is half an Arab, was then one of the richest men in Turkey. He was very powerful politically. He, too, loved the English lady, but he did not declare it, for that would have been folly and useless. He arranged to take her secretly, to marry her and to install her in his house as his favorite wife. That would have been the end of her.

"In due time she would be missed and search would be made. But who would search the household of Ismail Bey, the most civilized and one of the most highly-placed of all Turks, one who had been Ambassador to England? Who would have suspected *him*? What Constantinople is now I do not know, but twenty years ago the searching of a great man's household was impossible.

"So, in time, the hunting and confusion and anger would pass away and the world, for that poor English lady, would have ended at the walls of the great secret house of Ismail Bey. I, who have talked so little for so many years, can not very easily make it plainer to you, madam. Only it is true that she would have vanished and all the inquiry would have ended nowhere at all, as such inquiries almost always ended in Constantinople.

"Only Ismail Bey and that poor lady would have known, and he would have laughed, and she would have wept. But, by chance and the good-nature of a man who did secret work for Ismail Bey, I learned of the plot and at the last moment I was able to get the little lady into safety at the Embassy, from whence in good time she returned to England. Nothing more was said nor anything done. The father understood. His daughter was safe, and to accuse Ismail Bey would be folly. But the father conceived a horror for such a country and presently the family left Turkey and went home to England. I had a letter from the little lady I had saved. She had married her lover and they were very happy. And that was the end of it all for them.

"I put away the letter and continued my work for a year longer. I often saw Ismail Bey and he was always courteous to me. Never once did he give any sign that he knew it was I who had frustrated him, until I had almost come to believe that he did not know. Then at last I was about to leave Turkey myself and return to Washington. It was my last evening in Constantinople. I had taken farewell of all my friends and was returning home late that night. It was hot and my servant had prepared tea for me, when I returned to my house which I should leave forever on the following morning. I drank the tea—it was strong and hot and bitter, for it is wise to drink it so in the hot weather. But the tea was drugged so heavily that I fell asleep in my chair, instantly.

"WHEN I woke I found myself lying on a slab of stone in the ruins of the pavilion on the other side of the island. Ismail Bey was seated opposite, watching me. He saw that I was waking again and could understand. He hesitated a little while, smoking. Then as I lifted myself up, sick and dizzy, he spoke.

"'Do you understand, American wolf?' he said.

"And, reeling from the drugs though I was, I understood indeed that I was in his power. But I said nothing.

"'You thought that I had forgotten, fool,' said Ismail Bey. 'Perhaps it was in your mind that I did not know who snatched the Englishwoman away from me. Well, you know now—and I will cut into your body with whips so that you shall never forget the anger of Ismail Bey. Yes, I will flog you first and leave you here to rot!'

"Then he told me that I was upon this island. He had bought it years before, when he was no more than a boy, for his pleasure island, and had wearied of it.

"'Many years it is since I took pleasure from the possession of this island!' he said, 'but now it will please me greatly once more, for you will never leave it again. No ships come here, for it is too small, and the fishermen leave it alone, for it is my island and private to me. You shall be guarded well and food shall be sent to you if you desire to live—and, I remember to order it. So

Digitized by Google

you shall pay for the insolence of disarranging my plans.'

"He stood up. 'And now you shall be flogged!' he ended. He clapped his hands and his servants came.

The old man shuddered uncontrollably.

"And they flogged me then with whips! I did not know that a man could endure such beating and remain alive. When my senses came back to me, it was agony to stand, agony to lay down, agony to be still or to move. It was as though they had flogged me with swords!

"After that, Ismail Bey used to come often to taunt me, for many years. Then he came less and less. I have not seen him for two years. But at times one of his guards comes ashore and leaves me a little flour—when he remembers it. I have tried to escape many times—the mainland is not far—but there are always guards sailing and fishing about the island and many times have these guards landed and burnt the boats and rafts I have built. Moreover there was always the awful flogging over again each time I tried to escape. And so I have made an end of trying."

The old man ceased.

Carew looked over at his wife, his face white with anger.

"Unless I had seen with my own eyes and heard the story from his own lips I should not have believed it!" he whispered. "But it is true."

She nodded.

"I am going to ask him the name of the lady he saved," she said.

At her question the old man looked up.

"Her name, madam? It was Wilbraham—Stella Wilbraham."

Stella Carew sobbed suddenly, crossed over to the broken man on the stool and put her arms around him with a strange air of protection.

"I knew! I knew!" she added, her eyes full of tears. "She was my mother! I have heard her speak of you—wondering where you were. You are Charlie Forrester?

The man nodded.

"That is what they called me twenty years ago, madam," he said lamentably.

Then suddenly he began to weep also—terribly, with great, rending, tearing sobs, as a man weeps.

Stella Carew and her husband went quietly out to the platform, leaving him alone. There was nothing they could do or say to comfort him.

Fate had taken twenty years from his life—twenty of his best years—and nothing could ever restore them to him. Gone—they were gone—"years that the locust hath eaten." What comfort was there for a man who had paid so great a price for doing no more than any man's duty?

Twenty years! And all that he could do through the wasted desolate age was to keep his sanity and retain his self-respect!

IV.

IN THE strange days that followed, Stella Carew, from wondering at what seemed to be the most extraordinary coincidence in the world, came gradually to see that, so far from being a coincidence, the finding of the island and the prisoner seemed to be fated.

She had heard from her mother so much that was strange and fascinating about Turkey that not unnaturally when she married a husband rich enough to satisfy every whim and fancy in the most luxurious style, she declared for a honeymoon in and about the country in which her mother's youth had been spent. Constantinople had changed vastly during the last twenty years and in spite of the horror of Turkey and things Turkish which her own experience had left with her, Stella's mother was aware that there existed no reason why her daughter, in the care of a man like John Carew, should not see the country.

So the young couple had come to Turkey—idly enough, little dreaming of the outcome. That they should spend much of their time picnicking from the luxurious little motor-boat in preference to more elaborate cruising on Carew's big yacht was natural enough. The sudden storm that had thrown them on the pleasure island of Ismail Bey was the only coincidental event in the whole chain of events leading up to their discovery.

The problem that occupied Carew now was to get his wife and Forrester away from the island. Pending its solution, he was intent on making the place habitable, and to accomplish this the dogs must be destroyed.

Now that he had added to the complicated system of traps arranged by Forrester the Winchester rifle and a fairly plenti-

Digitized by Google

ful supply of ammunition, he foresaw no trouble.

He was a man quick to action and he wasted no time. For the next few days he left his wife to talk with the old man who had saved them from the hunger-maddened brutes that prowled ceaselessly about the dwelling-tree. There was the news of twenty years to give him and it had to be given tactfully, in such a way that the man should not feel he had not lost too perfect a happiness. Though he did not appear to be aware of it, he had come very near to madness.

The Carews knew this and handled him accordingly. Certain it is that the old man, brightening hourly under the kindly sympathy of Stella Carew, came as near to perfect happiness as was possible for one who had endured what he had endured. Carew's cigar-case had proved a treasure beyond gold to him. He smoked with a care that in any other man would have been laughable, but in him it was pathetic.

Of Carew he seemed to be a little in awe—rather like a schoolboy with his headmaster. But that would wear off. It was the strangeness of meeting men who treated him as one with equal rights.

Stella he worshipped frankly—much as Chief, the bull terrier, worshipped her

So the days passed. The conversation of the two in the hut was punctuated by the sharp little reports of the Winchester from the platform outside, as Carew picked off one by one the hungry dogs below, who knowing well that they were in peril yet could not resist the awful cannibal banquet that the carefully-aimed bullets from the platform in the tree spread lavishly for them.

It was all very simple. Carew would shoot thirty or forty in a day. The night following would be made hideous with the sound of ghoulish revelry below. The next morning would reveal the space that had been covered with the bodies, cleared again, save for a dreadful litter of gnawed bones, scraps of hide and skulls.

But at the end of the third day the survivors were sated and lazy and kept to the thickets.

There could not have been more than a third of them left—some sixty or seventy. The big pack had broken up and they went now in couples or small groups of four or five.

Carew left the platform now and hunted them on foot. At the end of another two days he had reduced them to forty or so and these fled at the crack of a twig.

It was no longer necessary for Forrester to take his flaming brazier with him when he went down to the water to catch fish, for no longer was there anything to fear from the outcast scavengers of Constantinople. It was time to abandon the tree and go down to the shore, where Carew hoped to be able to attract the attention of one of the fisherman guards. All that remained then was the promise of sufficient payment to assure a message being delivered to the captain of Carew's yacht, which lay off Constantinople.

They had lived two days in the cave when, one morning, a small fishing-boat grounded quietly on the beach and a man stepped out. He was heavily armed and glanced constantly at the fringe of trees at the back of the beach. He dragged a sack from the boat, threw it on the sands and, lifting a revolver, fired twice in the air.

Forrester, who was cooking at the mouth of the cave, turned around suddenly.

"That is Fakri, the guard," he said, his eyes on Carew. "I think he would take a message to the yacht if you paid him well."

THEY went out and down to the man who had signalled. He was already back in the boat but he showed no signs of going. Evidently he held himself in readiness to back off instantly upon the appearance of the dogs.

He seemed more surprised to see Forrester without his brazier than to see the Carews.

"Where are the dogs?" he asked with a sort of curt curiosity, much as though he had been addressing a dog.

It was Carew who answered.

"Dead," he said in Turkish. He took a handful of money from his pocket and showed it to the man.

"Seest thou this, Fakri the Ragged?" he said with a glance at the clothes of the ruffian in the boat.

The man's eyes gleamed as he answered. In one second his air and tone had become servile, fawning.

"All this and ten times as much shall be thine when thou hast done what I say." He picked four Turkish pounds—coins of one hundred piasters each.

Digitized by Google

"Take these!" he said, and, Fakri nearly fell out of the boat in his haste to get ashore. Probably he had never owned so much money in his life before.

"Listen to me," said Carew, and explained what he wanted done. It was simple enough. Fakri was to find the yacht *Stella*, deliver a note to the captain and return, with the yacht, to the island. He would receive from the captain ten Turkish pounds when the note was delivered and, later, when Carew, his wife and Forrester were safely on board, he would receive a further fifty.

Without a flicker of hesitation Fakri transferred his allegiance from Ismail Bey to Carew. He would have cut throats for a tenth of the total sum promised him. It was necessary only to glance at the greedy eyes to know that here was a man who would be loyal to them—for as long as they paid heavily for loyalty.

"Go then—and quickly!" said Carew. With the salute of a slave, Fakri literally leaped into his boat.

"So *that's* all right!" laughed Carew, as he turned to the others.

But Forrester looked grave.

"Twenty years—twenty years—for—lack of ten gold-pieces!" he muttered, his lips trembling. "He would never believe that I could reward him after I escaped if he took me to the mainland!"

"But look!" said Stella suddenly.

The two men turned again to the sea. Fakri had ceased hauling on his sail and was drifting idly, staring at a big white motor-boat that was sliding into the bay.

"It is Ismail Bey!" said Forrester, shrinking instinctively behind Carew, like a frightened child. The movement touched Carew's temper. It was not good for an American gentleman to slink from the approach of any Turk in the scared furtive way that his years of ill-treatment had taught Forrester.

"For God's sake, Forrester, don't look like that before this Turkish swine!" he said savagely. Then he spoke quickly to his wife. "I'm sorry, Stella. Please go back to the cave, dear. There may be trouble. Take Chief with you." Reluctantly enough she went, and even more reluctantly the bull terrier followed her.

Fakri came ashore once more.

"Patience," he called softly as he came. "Until his excellency has departed."

Carew nodded and turned to Forrester.

"Remember," he said, "you have nothing more to fear from Ismail Bey." He indicated the little rifle which he held inconspicuously behind him. "At the first sign of trouble I will pot him as I would a rabbit!"

"Good!" said Forrester. They turned to the man from the motor-boat who was coming up the beach to them.

Ismail Bey evidently apprehended no danger. He had noted that Fakri gave no sign that anything unusual seemed likely to result from the unexpected presence of the strangers and so, puzzled a little, but quite at ease, he came up to inspect his prisoner who seemed to have escaped the dogs. He came forward, a sleek, erect, well-preserved man of about fifty. He was dressed in white, well-cut clothes, obviously made in London. The bulge of a revolver was visible at one of his side pockets. Two men, each with a rifle, followed some few yards behind him.

FAKRI had stopped the two men and whispered furiously, showing the coins he had just received and he judged that they would not be hasty to use their weapons until investigation as to possible profits for themselves.

And then Carew was face to face with Ismail Bey. For a fraction of a second there was silence. Then Carew felt on his arm the tremor of Forrester's hand and he threw prudence to the winds.

"You d—— blackguard!" he roared, and jumped at the Turk, groping for his throat. Ismail Bey went down with a startled scream. His hand, clutching the revolver, flew up in the air. Carew jumped clear, wrenched the weapon from him and threw it on the sand. Vaguely he heard the voice of Fakri jabbering of gold, incredible sums of gold, to the escort, and he understood, in a fraction of time, why they did not shoot. The face of Ismail Bey rose before him, distorted and twisted with rage and astonishment. He smashed his fist into it with all his force. Ismail Bey dropped again, writhing.

A queer, cracked voice at his side suddenly screamed shrilly: "Stand clear!"

And Forrester leaped past him, the revolver of Ismail Bey glittering in his hand.

"Steady, man, for God's sake!" yelled Carew and sprang to Forrester. He was just in time to knock the revolver aside.

Digitized by Google

A bullet went moaning across to the woods even as Carew jerked up the other's wrist.

"Better not, Forrester," he said. "Let him have a taste of what he has given you! Nothing in the world can save him from a Turkish prison now. We'll make the United States ring with this!"

He slipped the revolver into his pocket and picked up the Winchester.

Ismail Bey had sat up, a dazed expression on his face. Probably it was the first time in his life any one had dared to strike him—and Carew had hit with all his strength.

"Lie down, you dog!" said Carew.

And Ismail Bey lay down.

"Get up before I order you and I'll shoot you with all the pleasure in the world!"

Then he turned to Fakri and the escort.

"I desire to go in the motor-boat with my people to the yacht," he said curtly. "How much?"

The men whispered together. Servants of Ismail Bey though they were, it seemed that they possessed no loyalty nor any regard for him.

They came to a decision and Fakri spoke.

"We are very poor men," he said smoothly. "And his Excellency will be our enemy." Evidently he was prepared to haggle. He had tasted blood already that day.

But Carew cut him short. He offered each man fifty Turkish pounds—five thousand piasters—and they looked as though they had encountered a miracle. Evidently the service of Ismail Bey was not a pronouncedly lucrative profession.

Ten mimutes later Ismail Bey was permitted to rise.

"You will remain on this island until I send those for you who will see that you are paid in full for what you have meted out to my friend," said Carew.

As the motor-boat, now with six passengers, slid away Carew, flung the revolver ashore.

Stella looked at him—a question in her eyes.

But her husband did not appear to notice.

V.

EARLY next morning they reached the yacht. But only Stella Carew went aboard. The two men went ashore at once, for Carew was anxious that the American Consul should see Forrester exactly as he had left the island.

It takes a great deal to move a Consul to anger, but nevertheless, within five minutes of their arrival at the Consulate, *one* Consul, at least, was foaming with rage.

"Twenty years—twenty years!" he snapped furiously. "Leave this to me! Ismail Bey is out of favor with the Goverment just now—we shall have no difficulty there."

But it seemed that Ismail Bey knew also that he could not look for protection from his own people, for on the following day those sent to the island to bring him to justice found him lying in the cave by the sea, with a revolver clutched stiffly in his hand and his forehead blown away.

The question that Stella Carew's eyes had asked was answered—it seemed that Ismail Bey had accepted the invitation which the throwing of the revolver to him had implied.

A MONTH later Forrester stood one evening with Stella Carew and her husband, watching the American coast rising over the dim horizon.

"Well, you will soon be home!" said Carew.

"Yes—home." Forrester caught his breath, and, for a moment, the distant coast seemed blurred.

Stella Carew patted his arm in a little friendly gesture, very womanly and wholly sympathetic, and they left him alone standing at the rail, staring silently and intently with a sort of passionate yearning at the far shore.

He found himself thinking of what an old priest at Gibraltar had said to him. What was it? "Look forward my son, always forward. Refrain from thinking of the evil that has been done upon you.

"Dwell upon the good that has now come to you. God will punish your enemies even as He will repay you a hundred-fold all that you have lost. Go now to your own people, to your own home, thankfully, without bitterness!"

Forrester's lips moved silently, repeating the kindly words over and over again—and then suddenly he covered his face with his hands. After twenty years!

The yacht steamed on through the starlight, swiftly, serenely, surely, toward "his own people and his own home."

Digitized by Google

WRECKS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS COAST

HEROIC BATTLES OF THE LIFE-SAVING SERVICE

BY PERCY M. CUSHING

IF YOU run through the history of the United States Life Saving Service, you will find that, with the exception of occasional widely separated years, the coast of Massachusetts lays claim to more disasters than any stretch of seaboard within the scope of beach patrol, Long Island and New Jersey not excepted. This is partly on account of the particularly heavy sea-traffic in the vicinity, but it is chiefly due to Cape Cod. It is this crooked finger of land that has beckoned a thousand ships to their doom and which in the hollows of its dunes holds many a tragic story of lives snuffed out in desperate grapple with wave and wind.

THE night of Tuesday, March 11, 1902, was wild and storm-strewn. Running up along the coast, the ocean-going tug *Sweepstakes* was making bad weather with her tow of the two big coal barges, *Wadena* and *John C. Fitzpatrick*. For hours the triple-expansion engines of the tug had been churning her screw in the drift of the heavy head sea and shortly before daylight her captain discovered that she was making no headway. He then decided to lie to and, while feeling about for an anchorage in the gloom, the barges ran aground on the edge of Shovelful Shoal, off the Southern end of Monomoy Island, Massachusetts.

When daylight came, the crew of the Monomoy Life Saving Station boarded the barges, but finding it impossible to float them on the flood tide, took their crews ashore.

It was six days later that the disaster occurred. Wreckers sent from Boston were at work on the barges. The tug *Peter Smith* was on the ground, having replaced the *Sweepstakes*. On the night of the 16th the weather thickened and a gale swept in from the sea. The *Smith* hove alongside the *Wadena*, which was in the most perilous position, and took all the men off save five. Those who remained on the barge were the owner, W. S. Mack, Captain C. D. Olsen and three Portuguese wreckers.

The night passed without incident, but early on the morning of the 17th Keeper Eldridge of the Monomoy Station received a telephone from the Captain of the *Smith* asking him if everything was all right on the *Wadena*. This alarmed Eldridge, as he did not know any one had been left on the barge all night. He started at once for the point of the island, three

Digitized by Google

miles away, to look over the situation. The *Wadena* lay half a mile off shore from the point. She seemed to be riding easily on the bar, but the flag of distress was flying from her rigging. This was a signal Eldridge could not ignore. Instantly the Keeper was in the watchhouse at the Point telephoning the station, and ordering Seth Ellis, Number One surfman, to get out the life-boat and come down to the Point in it where he would pick them up.

It seemed that Ellis launched the boat in an ugly sea, shipping considerable water, but reached the Point in safety and took on board the Keeper, who directed the boat to lay alongside the barge.

It was a terrific pull through the breakers that rolled in across the shoals to the *Wadena*, but the life-savers accomplished it and put their boat under the lee of the barge at about noon. Keeper Eldridge then directed the men to get into the surfboat and told them that he would take them ashore. The rail of the big barge was a dozen feet from the water and it was here that the trouble began.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE BARGE "WADENA"

THE men on the barge lowered themselves overside on a rope, but as Captain Olsen, a very large man, was halfway down, he lost his hold and fell on the second thwart of the lifeboat, breaking it, and making it impossible for the rowers to use it. In addition, the boat was crowded and the wind, which had been momentarily increasing, was tumbling huge combers into the windward of the barge. It was into this maelstrom of breakers that it was necessary for the handicapped crew of the life-saving station to pull their overloaded boat, and they made a swift and able attempt to accomplish it. At the instant the starboard oarsmen were swinging the head of the life-boat to meet the sea, a giant comber lifted under the quarter and dashed a barrel of water overside. That was the signal for a panic among the rescued men that, before it subsided, cost twelve lives.

The Portuguese wreckers, in a frenzy of fear, stood up in the boat, rocking it to and fro in their endeavors to escape the momentary inrush of water, and though the life-savers fought to force them into the bottom of the craft, this could not be done before the next shouldering wave caught the bow of the boat, swung her broadside and turned her over.

Then ensued a desperate struggle for life. A hundred yards to leeward the breakers were smashing themselves into white foam on the bar. There was just one chance in a million that the boat could be righted before the sea carried her into them. Once she reached them it would be all over. Hampered by the wreckers, the life-savers fought desperately in those few minutes left them before the combers should be reached. Three times they righted the boat and strove heroically to bail her, but each time she was again overturned. They were fighting the last tragic fight when they were swept into the smothering foam of the bar.

At that instant seven men, including all from the *Wadena*, went to face their maker. Five of the hardiest of the life-savers still clung to the capsized boat. They were Keeper Eldridge and Surfmen Ellis, Kendrick, Foye and Rogers. By a superhuman effort Kendrick crawled to the bottom of the overturned craft, but the next sea swept him to join the seven who had gone a moment before. Foye was the next. "Good-by, boys," he gasped as a smother of foam took him. That left Ellis, Rogers and Eldridge the Keeper, and Eldridge was fast losing strength. The water was icy cold and every sea submerged the boat, turning her over and over while the survivors clung wildly to her gunwale.

In a brief lull in the wash of the sea, Ellis crawled to the bottom of the boat. Below him, a foot away, was the Keeper, a friend since boyhood. At the risk of his own life, Ellis dropped into the water again, pushed Eldridge up on the bottom with his last strength, and again crawled out himself. The next second a sea washed both off and the Keeper, after losing and regaining his grasp on the gunwale several times, disappeared in the maelstrom of waters. That left Ellis and Rogers, a big and very strong man.

In this desperate moment Rogers threw his arms around the other surfman's neck in a death-grip. For moments, while the sea battered and the foam strangled them, they fought the last grim fight for life, Ellis to break the grip of his frenzied comrade, Rogers to retain it. Suddenly, when it seemed that both must drown, Rogers' strength left him. His arms relaxed; his

Digitized by Google

eyes glazed. "I'm going!" he gasped and sank.

A moment later the boat drifted inshore of the outer breakers and for a brief space was in smoother water. Ellis once more crawled out on the bottom and succeeded in pulling the center-board out so that he could hold on to it and better maintain his position.

I NOW, you will remember that at the time of the stranding of the *Wadena*, the *John C. Fitzpatrick*, her sister barge, had also gone aground. She had gone over the outer bar and was lying between it and the inner breakers. On board her was Capt. Elmer F. Mayo, of Chatham, who was in charge of lightening her. The *Fitzpatrick* was so far away from the *Wadena* that Captain Mayo, and two other men who were with him, did not see the life-saving boat go out, nor did they have any knowledge of the grim tragedy that was being enacted, until, glancing over the rail, Captain Mayo saw an overturned life-boat with a single man clinging to it.

The capsized boat was some distance from the barge, but Mayo did not hesitate. "I'll get that fellow," he announced coolly.

On the deck of the *Fitzpatrick* lay a small twelve-foot dory, the only boat aboard, a totally unfit craft for the furious sea that was thundering across the shoals, Kicking off his boots, Mayo and the other men, who begged him not to go as it would be certain death, ran the dory overside, only to find that there were no thole-pins or oars in her. Grasping a marlinspike and a rasp, the Chatham Captain jammed them into the starboard thole-pin sockets; then, snapping a broomstick over his knee, he rigged the pieces to port. Meantime a pair of sawed-off oars were found. Tearing these from the hands of his comrades, who still tried to restrain him, Mayo leaped into the tiny craft and pushed off single-handed on an errand, the only possible end of which seemed death.

Fortunately the dory took the water right side up and Mayo, plying his sawed-off oars desperately, kept her stern to sea, as the tremendous rollers gathered behind her, shouldered her forward with terrific speed and let her slip down with a sickening sag into the trough, to be picked up by the next wave.

How the Captain of the wrecking crew kept his fragile craft afloat, those who watched him from the *Fitzpatrick* could never understand. But he did keep her afloat, and the set of the tide and the gale carried him down toward the capsized life-boat to which Ellis clung now with the last of his ebbing strength.

The life-saver said afterward that he saw a dory thrown over the side of the *Fitzpatrick* as he drifted near her, but that a moment later the scud and spindrift were driven so thick and ceaselessly before his eyes that he saw nothing, until suddenly out of the mist a tiny, bobbing boat loomed a dozen feet away. Then the occupant of this boat shot her skilfully alongside the swamped life-boat and the exhausted surf-man toppled into her.

Mayo, with the half-conscious life-saver lying limp in the bottom of the dory, had kept his word to his mates on the *Fitzpatrick*. He had "got that fellow"; but the hardest struggle lay yet ahead. To attempt to pull the dory back to the barge in the teeth of the gale would have been folly. To try to run her across the incoming combers to the lee of the Point would have been suicide. There was only the naked shore ahead and here the breakers were piling twenty feet high, barring the beach with a solid wall of bursting seas.

For a moment the steel-nerved wrecker held desperately back on his stubby oars, hesitating before the last grapple with death. And that momentary pause probably saved his life and that of Ellis.

Over the crest of a dune on shore a figure was hurrying toward the point where the dory must beach. Mayo saw it and hung on against the furious sweep of the surf landward. He was a big and strong man, but when he reached shore there were blue marks on his arms where blood-vessels had burst under the skin in that last mighty effort.

One minute—two—perhaps three minutes passed and then, with the man on the beach running down the sand to render aid, Mayo let go and shot the dory into the hell of the breakers. Instantly she was lost from sight, reappeared again, rolling over and over, with the wrecking Captain helping Ellis to hold on, and then the man on the beach had rushed waist-deep into the surf and dragged both to safety.

Cape Cod was in sorrow for weeks after

Digitized by Google

the loss of the Monomoy crew and the consequent making of widows and orphans.

The actions of Keeper Eldridge, however, stand typical of the devotion to duty which the Service demands of its employees. The *Wadena* did not break up and was later floated. But Keeper Eldridge had said "We must go. There is a flag of distress in the rigging."

Ellis, the sole survivor of the ill-fated station, was promoted to the Keepership, and Mayo received a gold medal for his courage.

THE DISGRACE OF CAPTAIN ATKINS

NECESSARILY, the most thrilling stories of the coast-watchers are those in which loss of life is entailed and therefore, in a measure, they are accounts of the failures of the men of the Service. But they are stories of noble failures and behind some of them lie tragedies other than those of death.

Perhaps one of the greatest of these is woven about the career of Captain David H. Atkins, until November 30, 1880, Keeper of the Peaked Hill Bar Station, Cape Cod.

This man had followed the sea from boyhood, whaling, fishing and coasting. In 1872 he became Keeper of the Peaked Hill Bar Station. From that time until 1878 this stormy outpost of the beach patrols saw many terrible wrecks, and Atkins, always leading his crew in the thick of battle with the weather, made an enviable record for himself among men of the Service and with the inhabitants of that particular coast.

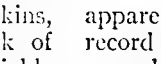
Then came a wild day in April, 1879, and, as it appears in the chronicles of the Department at Washington, "a blot fell across the record of Keeper Atkins."

On this April day the Schooner *Sarah J. Fort* stranded near Peaked Hill Bar. The weather was the worst of the year. A terrific sea, coupled with an onshore hurricane and a temperature very low for the time of the year, faced Atkins and his crew as they discovered the schooner and took their apparatus to the beach.

Without hesitation the Keeper ordered the surfboat launched, but the sea was so heavy that it was thrown back on the beach. Time and again in the twenty hours of watching and battling with the storm that followed the Keeper led his men into the breakers with the boat, but each time they were beaten back, drenched with the Winter sea which froze in their clothing, cut and bruised from the buffeting they received.

All day and night they stood by, without food, without rest, fighting with the surf and being met by defeat. The hands of some were frozen; others were so weak that they could hardly stand; all were heart-sick and exhausted.

"And then," says the Service Report of the occurrence, "the last time the launch was attempted the boat was hurled high on the shore, her crew were spilled out like matches from the box and the boat was shattered. And Captain Atkins and his men, having eaten nothing since the evening before, spent, faint, heart-sick, had been baffled and had to endure the mortification of seeing a rescue effected by an unworn volunteer crew in a fresh boat brought from the town. The investigation revealed that the men upon the wreck might have been properly landed by the life-lines but for Keeper Atkins' failure to employ the Lyle gun which had recently been furnished the Station, through a singular inapprehension of its powers."



IT WAS a bitter pill for the Service — the defeat of its men by a volunteer crew. Atkins' error was apparent and commented upon; but his past record for valor saved him from being removed from the Keepership of the Station. But it did not save him from a worse fate than removal could have been. The men who toil along the coast for their living are a grim, exacting class. They take bravery as a matter of course; the slightest sign of wavering in time of stress casts a blight that can never die. One failure, be it ever so slight, overtops a hundred of the most heroic successes.

Now, the strange part of Atkins' failure seems to be that his mistake at the wreck of the *Fort* does not appear to have been the result of a nerve that, worn out by intense suffering, sapped by constant effort in fearful weather, flinched at the crucial moment. It appears to have been a neglect to employ an opportunity through lack of knowledge of its effectiveness. Nevertheless, Keeper Atkins and his men, whose business it was to rescue the crew of the *Fort* if such was within human power,

Digitized by Google

had failed to do so and a volunteer crew of boatmen had done it for them. In the eyes of the hard-fisted fishermen it was a stigma for which no past records of valor could compensate. It is probable that the shame struck deeper to the heart of Atkins than of any others. He had been a man admired and looked up to in the village because of his past heroism. Now that was all forgotten.

His old friends averted their faces when they passed him on the street. The children jeered at him; the hard seacoast women derided him; yet the Government kept him in the Service, for the Government was human and humane. It acknowledged that there were human limitations; it understood how a brave man might err and do so without lack of courage. But to the people of the coast Atkins had failed in his duty, and in the public mind, as nothing succeeds like success, so nothing fails like failure.

This attitude toward Atkins in the village nearest the Station reached the Department at Washington and in the Service Report for 1880 it is referred to as follows:

"There is an expression one often hears among the people of this coast, which, to their staid habit of speech, appears of deep intensity. This is simply 'the goading slur.' It conveys unspeakably bitter feeling if one says of another, 'I had to take from him the goading slur!' The goading slur was unhappily frequent with Captain Atkins' name and fame up to the hour of his death, since his failure at the work of rescue, and the proud and sensitive man felt the shower of rough stings no less keenly for the silence with which he bore them."

That was just it—Atkins had to take that epithet—had to take it because he knew he had failed. Had he succeeded, he would have knocked down the man who applied it to him. But he had not succeeded—he had failed!

He stuck to his work at the Station grimly, shunned, disgraced among the blunt-spoken fishermen of the coast who never remembered the other wrecks which the nerve of this very man had snatched from the list of fatalities. But Keeper Atkins must have remembered those wrecks—must have brooded over the one slip that had wiped out a record formerly spotless.

At any rate, when he left his home to open the Station for the season of 1880, his wife, as she kissed him good-by, said, "David, do be careful."

"I will try to do so," he answered, "but I will die on duty if it is necessary."

KEEPER ATKINS CLEARS HIS RECORD

THE night of November 30, 1880, was clear but windy. A heavy gale was piling the surf over the outer bar off the Peaked Hill Bar Station. Surfmen Fisher and Kelley left the Station at four o'clock to make the eastward and westward patrol. Kelley started from the door first. As he did so he heard the slatting of sails and the banging of blocks above the wind. To the westward he saw the lights of a vessel close inshore.

Shouting to Fisher to give the alarm, he ran down the beach, burning his Coston light. Keeper Atkins glanced at the surf and ordered out the boat. The men dragged it eastward until they were opposite the stranded vessel, which proved to be the sloop *C. E. Trumbull* of Rockport. The crew manned the boat. In her, besides Atkins, were Elisha Taylor, Stephen F. Mayo, Samuel O. Fisher, Charles Kelley and Isaiah Young. Kelley, Fisher and Young were the only ones that reached shore alive and none of them was ever able to perform service again.

The story of what took place out there under the darkness on Keeper Atkins' last errand of rescue is best told, perhaps, in the personal account of Isaiah Young, one of the survivors. The narrative of this man, in his own words, is taken from the Life Saving Report of 1881. It reads:

"When we launched, the vessel was still some to the eastward. We went off in this manner to take advantage of the tide that was running to the eastward between the bar and the shore. It was low tide. The sea was smooth on the shore, but on the bar, where the vessel lay, it was rough enough to be dangerous. I pulled the starboard bow oar, double-banked, with Stephen F. Mayo. Taylor pulled the harpooner's oar (bow). The vessel headed northeast. Her main-sail stood full and had in two reefs, with sheet half-way out, and she was rolling the boom in the water. We went under her stern, a little out on her lee quarter and threw a line, which the people on board made fast, I think, to the main-sheet bits.

"We hauled up from the boat until the

Digitized by Google

bow lapped on to her quarter. Keeper Atkins called to them to jump in. They threw in a jacket, then a clothes-bag. Atkins told them, 'We are not here for your baggage; get in yourselves!' I was holding the boat clear of the vessel with a boat-hook, and four men came into the boat with a rush. One came on to me and the boat-hook broke or twisted off in its socket and we swung in under the counter. Keeper Atkins called to the men on board, 'Cast off!' They did not and he said 'Cut!' and they let us go.

"We landed four persons. This trip could not have consumed more than fifteen minutes. The second time we went off we approached not as much on a fore-and-aft line with her as at first, but came up on her quarter more athwart-ships. As we got quite near, a sea swept us back and we pulled up again. Keeper Atkins called, 'Cut the main sheet!' but it was not done by the people on board the vessel.

"When we pulled up again, after being thrown back, Taylor stood in the bow with the line ready to heave. I cautioned Keeper Atkins to have a care for the boom. He said, 'Be ready with the boat-hook; I will look out for the boom.' I was just taking up the hook when a sea came around the stern, threw the stern of the boat more toward the boom as the vessel rolled to leeward and the boom went into the water. I saw both Kelley and Keeper Atkins dodge when the boom came down, as it came near them; but I am very positive it did not strike the boat with any force, if at all.

"AS THE vessel rolled to windward and the boom rose it caught under the cork belt near the stroke rowlock and threw us over, bottom up. The gunwale came across my back and I got a blow in the side. I crawled upon the boat by means of the cork float around it. When on the boat, I saw Taylor throw his arm across the shoulder of the rudder and a sea wash him off. All got upon the boat. It went to the westward, with the flood running in that direction on the outside of the bar and would not throw across into the smooth water inside. I asked Mayo for a chew of tobacco. He took a piece from his pocket and passed it to me. I bit off a piece and put the remainder in my pocket.

"We rolled the boat over, right side up, and I was the first to get into her. Others got in; I am not positive how many. She did not keep right side up more than two minutes when a sea rolled us over again. We got on again and were washed off two or three times before I struck out for the shore. I asked Mayo to strike with me, as I knew him to be an excellent swimmer; but he said that we could not hold out to reach the shore and he would stay by the boat. Keeper Atkins was holding by the boat.

"Kelley had already struck out. I heard Taylor groan near me as I started, but did not see him. I headed a little down the shore, so as to swim before the sea, thinking it would heave me along faster. I turned on my back three times and rested. I could not kick my boots off. I kept on my mittens and sou'wester. As I swam I heard the morning train going across the east harbor dike and at one time I appeared to see the Captain of the schooner *Powow*, who was lost near Station No. 9, in January, 1878. I seemed to see him plainly and altered my course to swim by him. I had prepared his body for burial after it was picked up. I think that about this time I must have been growing very weak.

"I saw a gap in the beach which must have been Clara Bell Hollow, two miles from Station No. 7. When about three seas from the shore my sight began to fail and soon I could see nothing; but I kept swimming. I felt myself whirled over in the undertow and knew I was in the swash of the shore. When my hands struck the sand I held on all I could and crawled until I no longer felt the surf run up around me and lay down. I could not recover my feet.

"I recollect Surfman Cole saying, 'For God's sake, Isaiah, is this you?' and of his taking me up. I knew nothing more until I found myself in the Station, after being resuscitated. I should think that I remained by the boat half an hour before I struck out. The cork belt was all that enabled me to reach the shore. The cork belts on the boat are a good thing and should be kept on."

Thus Keeper Atkins died with his boots on, as he said he would die if necessary, in the performance of his duty. The gray sea that washed away his life took with it the stigma on his name. His funeral and that of the dead of his crew was held three days later. And the men who had applied

Digitized by Google

to him the phrase of extreme contempt followed his body to the grave with uncovered heads.

THE WRECK OF THE T. B. WITHERSPOON

THE tragic wrecks of the shoals of the Massachusetts coast are far too numerous and the heroic deeds of the Life Saving men too many to be enumerated here. It is possible to recount only a few of the most grim from the view-point of suffering and hardship; and often these are found most frequently in the wrecks of smaller vessels.

When the schooner *T. B. Witherspoon* went ashore on the southerly side of Nantucket Island on January 10, 1886, during the big blizzard of that year, she had on board nine persons, including Mrs. Burdick Berry, wife of the mate, and her five-year-old baby boy.

The schooner had been driven a hundred miles out of her reckoning by the tempest. She was discovered by the crew of the Surfside Station soon after she struck, about midnight. It was impossible for a boat to live in the surf, but the Lyle gun was brought into play and a line shot aboard. At this time seven men were in the mizzen rigging. They secured the line and hauled out the whip until it was almost in their grasp, when the line parted under the strain. Another line was shot and again the whip was almost secured, but this also parted.

At this time all but two of the men left the rigging and went below. Another line was fired and, in trying to grasp the whip, one of the men was jerked over into the ice-filled surf. This man had been most active in working on the lines and his comrade who remained in the rigging tried to haul out the next line unaided, but failing, induced two others to come up from the deck to help him. While struggling with the ice-crusted rope, his helpers froze to death in the shrouds and remained hanging there.

The survivor then went to deck and, getting the fifth line, made it fast to the foremast. A few moments previous to this another man had been seen to rush wildly forward and enter the fore deck-house. The one who had made fast the lines was then observed to go to this house and to return in a few minutes with the other. Together they succeeded in hauling off the whip and buoy and were taken ashore nearly frozen to death.

It was then that the tragic story was learned of what had been transpiring on the vessel during the hours the life-savers had been struggling to establish communication with the schooner.

The first to perish was the man who fell overboard at about noon. The next were the Captain and a sailor who had been frozen in the rigging. The other four souls, including the mate's wife and child, died in the cabin during the afternoon while the life-savers were fighting to save them.

At this time, the water in the cabin was waist-deep. Floating about in it, stiff and dead, were the ice-crusted bodies of two of the crew. Standing, with the ice forming about them, stood the mate, Berry, his child in one arm, the other about the waist of his dying wife, supporting her. Mrs. Berry died at three in the afternoon. "I must leave you," she said to her husband while the chill of death froze the smile on her lips. The child followed twenty minutes later. "Papa," said the little fellow, "won't God take us home?"

Berry, frenzied with grief, dashed from the cabin and took refuge in the forward deck-house where he threw himself down, and would have died had not the man on deck begged him to help haul off the breeches-buoy for their mutual safety.

Digitized by Google

PROTECTORS OF THE PEACE

By CRITTENDEN MARRIOTT.

CHAPTER I

UNDER SPECIAL ORDERS

THE Secretary of State leaned back in his chair and studied the young man before him. "Sit down, Mr. Topham," he said at last.

Topham sat down. He was a good-looking young fellow, soldierly and straight as a ramrod, but without the stiffness that usually goes with a military carriage. His tanned face and, in fact, his whole bearing spoke of an out-door life—probably a life on the sea. Such an occupation was also indicated by his taciturnity, for he said nothing, though the Secretary waited long, as if to give him a chance to speak.

Finally the Secretary seemed satisfied. "Mr. Topham," he said, "I have asked you to call on me for a purpose not connected, so far as I see at present, with your mission to Japan. Concerning that, I have nothing to add to the instructions already given you. Your reports will be to the Secretary of the Navy and you will, of course, not forget that your duties as a naval attaché to our embassy at Tokyo include the sending of any political information you may be able to pick up, in addition to such naval and military details as you may consider of importance. You speak Japanese, I believe?"

Topham bowed. "A little," he replied modestly. "More than a little, I understand," corrected the Secretary. "Doubtless you will find your knowledge of great advantage to you in your work. It is not of this, however, but of something quite different that I wish to speak."

He paused, as if to give the young man a chance, but the latter said nothing, merely waiting courteously until the Secretary resumed.

"Have you any special preference as to your route to Japan?" he asked.

Topham shook his head. "Very little," he answered. "I have scarcely had time to consider it. I supposed I should go by San Francisco, because that is the most direct route, but it makes no difference to me."

"I should like you to go by Europe and the Suez Canal. Have you any personal reason for desiring to go by Berlin?"

"Berlin? I don't know! Er—isn't Mr. Rutile in the embassy there?"

The Secretary's eyebrows went up a trifle. "Yes!" he answered. To Topham his voice sounded a little sharp.

"He was at Annapolis with me, but resigned shortly after being graduated. We were always chums and I should be very glad to see him again."

"Very well. That will serve as an excellent excuse for your choice of route. Kindly indicate to Admiral Brown of the Bureau of Navigation your desire to proceed by way of Berlin and he will issue the necessary

Digitized by Google

orders. You will find that these will direct you to proceed with due diligence via Berlin to Brindisi, where you will join the *U. S. S. Nevada*.

"You will proceed on the *Nevada* to Manila, where you will be detached and will proceed at once to Tokyo."

The Secretary paused and picked a long official document before him. "You might mention your plans to any officers or others whom you chance to meet. I wish your choice of route to appear as natural as as possible. You understand?"

Topham bowed. "I understand, sir."

"Very good. Now, Mr. Topham, permit me to ask whether your mention of Mr. Rutile just now was purely accidental or whether you had any information that I wanted you to take a confidential message to him?"

Topham laughed. "Do you really?" he asked. "No, Mr. Secretary, I had no information to that effect. It was altogether a coincidence, I assure you."

"Ah! I was beginning to wonder if there was a leak in my office. Well, Mr. Topham, I wish you would take this package and deliver it with your own hands in private to Mr. Rutile. You must not let even the Ambassador know. Only Mr. Rutile and yourself. You understand?"

"Surely, sir."

"Very good. Can you leave for New York to-night?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Please do so. I am sorry to curtail your stay in Washington, but there is no time to lose. Your passage has been taken on the steamer *Marlatic*, which leaves for Hamburg to-morrow morning. Make all the speed you can to Brindisi, remembering, however, that it is better to lose a day or two than by any undue haste to cast doubt on the credibility of your visit to Berlin. The *Nevada* will wait for you, though she is badly needed at Manila."

THE Secretary cleared his throat. "You will understand, Mr. Topham," he went on, "that I do not make a messenger out of you without good cause. It is very important that these documents should reach Mr. Rutile promptly and secretly. Probably you will make the trip without the least misadventure. Remember, however, that there are people who would be exceedingly anxious to get a look at these papers if they should learn of their existence.

"I can not warn you of them specifically, because I do not know who they are. We have tried to keep secret the fact that any papers are being sent and this is one reason for choosing you. I think we have succeeded, but one can never tell. If the fact has got out, attempts may be made to take the papers from you either by fraud or violence. I do not know how far the people who want them would go in their efforts to rob you, but it is quite possible that they might go the limit. Be warned, therefore, and be prepared to frustrate any attempt. You understand, Mr. Topham?"

Topham stood up. "I think so, sir," he replied.

"Very good. Here is the packet. That is all, Mr. Topham. Good luck." He rose and held out his hand.

Topham bowed and took his departure. Obedient to instructions, he went along the corridor to the offices of the Bureau of Navigation of the Navy Department, and explained to the Admiral in charge his desire to go by Berlin. Evidently the affair was cut and dried, for his orders were made out and placed in his hands in an amazingly few minutes.

While he waited for them he mentioned to several navy friends the route that he would take and his reason for desiring it.

Later, when, orders in hand, he made his way to the entrance of the building he met an old newspaper friend, to whom he casually mentioned his prospective journey.

His watch showed that barely five hours had elapsed since he had entered the building, with no thought either of Japan or Berlin in his mind. And now he was practically en route for both. The rapidity of the thing made his head swim. "Almost like war times," he muttered. "Great Scott! I wonder if we really are going to have trouble with the Japs!"

CHAPTER II

TOPHAM SMOKES A CIGARETTE

TOPHAM was on board the *Marlatic* in good time the next morning.

He leaned on the rail of the hurricane deck and watched the crowd idly. Somehow he felt lonely. Everybody else had

Digitized by Google

friends; he seemed alone in having no one to see him off. It struck him suddenly that his life was a very lonely one. If Lillian Byrd had not proved faithless——

His ranging eyes fell upon a girl who was just coming up the plank in the wake of a granite-faced chaperone and the current of his thoughts snapped short off. She was young, scarcely more than twenty, he judged, but there was something about her that set his pulses to pounding. With his whole strength he stared, and, as though drawn by his glance, the girl suddenly lifted her face and looked directly at him.

For an instant his heart stood still, then raced as it had never raced before—not even when Lillian Byrd had smiled at him in days gone by.

Never had he seen such eyes. They held him, enthralled him, with a magic that went beyond any reasoned process of the human brain. They seemed to fill her whole face —to fill it so that Topham thought he did not notice any other feature, though later, he found that he could picture its every detail—the great masses of red-black hair; the clear, dusky skin with a rose hiding in each cheek; the nose, chin, and teeth—a face for which men die.

Recklessly the navy officer stared—stared till the red flamed in the girl's cheek and she stumbled, her trembling fingers losing their hold upon the rail.

She must have said something, though Topham could not hear her, for the hard-faced chaperone turned and caught her arm. Topham saw her shake her head in negation to some question. The next instant she looked up once more. But not as before! Coldly her glance swept Topham's face, as coldly as if he did not exist. Then, before he could even attempt to catch her glance, she had stepped upon the deck and was hidden from his view.

Topham exhaled his breath gaspingly. He had been holding it for quite a minute, unknowingly. His thoughts ran riot. Who was she? What was her race, her state, her name? Her face bespoke a southern parentage, the blood that burned beneath it cried aloud of tropic heat. But her blue eyes were of the north. And the chaperone by her side could be nothing else than German.

Certainly they were people of distinction in their own land—probably in any land. The purser might know. He would go and ask.

The purser was affable but tremendously busy. Yes, he knew the lady. She had crossed on the *Marlatic* a few weeks before. She was Señorita Elsa Ferreira, a Brazilian lady who was connected with a famous German family. The lady with her was the Baroness Ostensacken. If Mr. Topham wanted any more information, he would endeavor to oblige him later on. At the present moment, however, in the hurry of departure, he——

TOPHAM thanked him and went on deck, feeling the throb of the propeller beneath his feet as he did so. The steamer was in midstream heading toward the Lower Bay and the open sea.

For an hour or more Topham paced the deck, hoping in vain for another sight of the girl who had so fascinated him. All afternoon he paced the deck despite the increasing unpleasantness of the weather. Darkness fell early and when he came up from dinner and from a tour of the main saloon without seeing anything of the girl, he was forced to abandon hope of finding her that night.

As he leaned grumpily over the rail, watching the dim white caps that chased each other athwart the course of the ship, one of the few passengers on deck came and leaned by his side.

"It makes rough, eh, señor?" said the man. "We shall have storm? What you think?"

At the soft Spanish accent, Topham looked quickly up and recognized a Spanish-looking personage whom he remembered having seen crossing the gang-plank.

"Oh, no!" he replied lightly. "I think not. It's damp and cold and unpleasant, but not stormy. To-morrow will probably be clear."

"That is good. I no like the storm. It is bad for the—the stomach, do you say, señor? I no get sick, but I feel sorry for the others." He took out a package of cigarettes and offered them to Topham. "You smoke, señor?" he asked.

Topham took one. The newcomer tossed away his own half-finished cylinder and lighted a fresh one from the box.

For a few moments the two men puffed in silence, chatting of indifferent subjects. Then the ship pitched more heavily than usual and the newcomer gulped.

"I—I no get sick," he protested. "I am old sailor. I—I think I eat something for

Digitized by Google

dinner that not agree with me. I—I think I go below." He slouched heavily away.

Topham did not laugh. With astonishment he had suddenly discovered that he too was feeling qualmy. The sensation was so novel, so utterly unlooked for, so hatefully amazing that he almost laughed.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "I'm feeling queer myself. I didn't know that any sea could make me sick. But—good heavens!"

The sensation had grown stronger with rapidity. In almost a moment it became acute. A fog came before his eyes and his senses actually reeled. Desperately he clung to the rail, feeling certain that he should fall if his grip loosened.

How long he stood there half unconscious, he never knew. He was roused by a woman's voice sounding in his ears.

"But he is ill. He is very ill. Quick! Catch him!"

Dimly he heard a faint rush of feet; then an arm was slipped under his. "This way señor," pleaded a voice—a very soft, musical voice. "Just a step—just a step. Now sit down! There!"

Guided by some one's arm Topham reeled for an immeasurable distance. Then he fell, also immeasurably. Finally, finding himself in a chair, he closed his eyes.

Only a few seconds later, it seemed, he opened them again and found himself stretched out in a steamer-chair. His head felt queer and his stomach shaky. As he gazed stupidly around, a woman who was bending over him straightened up.

"It's all right!" said the voice. "He's coming to."

Instinctively Topham struggled to his feet despite the girl's protests. He could see little more than her figure in the semi-darkness, but he nevertheless felt sure that it was the girl whom he had noticed some hours before.

"Miss Ferreira!" he murmured.

"Oh! you are better, señor! I am glad." Her English was perfect, except for a soft Castilian burr.

Topham strove to answer, and succeeded better than he hoped. "Yes, I'm better, thanks to you, señorita. Heavens, I don't know what got into me! I haven't been seasick since—since—— Is this your chair?"

"Yes, but do not move, I beg. I had just come on deck when I noticed that you were ill. Perhaps you ate something for dinner that disagreed with you."

"Perhaps!" ruefully. "That's the usual excuse for getting seasick, you know. However—Good heavens!"

Topham's heart almost stopped beating. He whipped his hand into his inner coat pocket and found—nothing! Desperately he snatched at another pocket—and another.

With distended eyes the girl stared at him. "You have lost something, señor?" she queried.

"Lost! Lost! Good heavens, I——" Suddenly Topham dropped his hands and laughed aloud. "Oh! What an idiot I am!" he cried. "No! I haven't lost anything, señorita. I must be daffy. I was looking for something, forgetting that I had put it away for safe-keeping."

CHAPTER III

SEÑORITA FERREIRA

TOPHAM woke the next day with a splitting headache and a slight but persistent nausea.

However, he rolled out of bed and got on deck as soon as possible. The fresh air slowly restored him to his normal condition and by noon little remained to remind him of his humiliating experience.

He saw nothing of Señorita Ferreira and though he kept a continual hopeful watch for her, he yet did not altogether regret her absence, as it gave him a chance to think things out.

All the forenoon he lay in his steamer chair, drinking in the sea-air and pondering the situation. In some points his illness had been unlike any seasickness he had ever experienced, though not entirely dissimilar to some cases of which he had heard. He felt certain that it was not an entirely natural illness, but was very uncertain whether it had resulted from an accidental bane in something he had eaten or whether he had been deliberately drugged. If he had been drugged, it could have been done with no other purpose than to rob him of the packet confided to him by the Secretary of State. He blessed the forethought that had led him to get the purser to lock it up in the ship's safe.

The incident, whether resulting from accident or from design, brought home to him the seriousness of his errand.

Digitized by Google

If he had really been the victim of a deliberate attempt at robbery, it proved that the cause of his journey to Berlin was no secret and that daring and unscrupulous foes were watching him. He had fooled them once, but the voyage was scarcely begun and it was not conceivable that they would not follow up the attack. Topham was as brave as most men, but he felt himself at a serious disadvantage; his enemies knew him—probably knew all about him—and he knew nothing of them, neither their sex nor their number.

It behooved him to find them out if possible. Naturally his first thought was of the soft-spoken Spanish-American who had offered him a cigarette. What was in that cigarette, he wondered. Was anything in it? Had he really been unconscious and, if so, for how long? Had he been practically so while he stood clutching the rail or had he only become so after he had been helped to the chair by Señorita Ferreira? Was she in the plot—if there was a plot?

Think as he might, however, he could not answer any of the questions that were puzzling him. All he could do was to let the situation develop itself. He would speak to the Spaniard, but he knew that he could hope to gain little by doing so. That gentleman, he was sure, would be provided with an unimpeachable defense.

As for Señorita Ferreira—well he had no real reason to suspect her—or any one else, for that matter. Probably, indeed, she had come up in time to frighten off his real assailant.

It was not till afternoon, however, that the girl came on deck. She was alone and Topham went straight to her side. "Pardon me," he said. "I want to thank you for your great kindness last night."

The girl smiled at him. "I hope you feel better, señor," she said.

"Much better. Seasickness is humiliating, but it isn't lasting. I am all right except that I am still a little shaky on my legs." As he spoke Topham wobbled with what he hoped was artistic verisimilitude.

The girl uttered a little cry. "Oh!" she exclaimed. "You must not stand. Take this chair." She indicated the one next to hers and Topham sank into it with a sigh of content.

TWO hours later, when the dinner-gong sounded, the girl started and looked at her watch. "Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "How the day has gone! I make you my compliments, señor! You have made the time fly."

She rose and Topham regretfully followed suit.

"I hope you will give me another opportunity, señorita," he pleaded.

"But yes, most certainly! I shall be charmed." With a smile and a nod she was gone.

The rest of the voyage—or as much of it as the Baroness Ostensacken would permit—Topham spent by Miss Ferreira's side.

He had learned that the girl was the daughter of a German mother and a Brazilian father, and that she was returning from a trip to Rio Janeiro, made in charge of her cousin, the Baroness, to join her brother at Berlin. She, on the other hand, learned that Topham was a naval officer, en route for Tokyo, who was going by Berlin to see an old friend.

Long before the end of the voyage, Topham had made up his mind that this was the one girl in the world for him. His earlier affection for Lillian Byrd he had absolutely forgotten or remembered only to wonder that he should ever have mistaken it for real love.

Yet what to do? His orders were imperative and he must obey them to the last jot and tittle. Nothing must be allowed to prevent his reaching Berlin and delivering his packet to Rutile, and nothing must be allowed to prevent him from reporting on board the *Nevada* at Brindisi four days later, and nothing must prevent him from reaching Japan and trying to get the information his Government desired.

For the first time in his life the collar galled. Oh, to be free to take this woman in his arms and tell her that he loved her! He believed that he would not do so in vain. But he knew that he had no right to speak while bound for the antipodes.

So he kept silent, even on the last evening of the voyage—even when he saw the sun rise beyond the distant line that marked Germany and the port of Cuxhaven, at the mouth of the Elbe, where they must leave the ship and finish their journey to Berlin by rail, to the destruction of all chance for further familiar intercourse.

Rapidly Cuxhaven swelled in the perspective and soon the steamer drew alongside the dock. As Topham watched the welcoming crowd, Miss Ferreira, standing

Digitized by Google

by his side, gave a cry and began to wave her handkerchief.

"See, señor!" she exclaimed. "My brother! Yonder! Heinrich! Heinrich!"

A patch of white fluttered in the hands of a tall, powerful-looking man on the pier and he pressed forward, eager to get on board. Soon Topham saw him coming up the plank.

The naval officer drew aside to let sister and brother meet without intrusion. Later, Miss Ferreira called him and he stepped forward to be introduced.

Ferreira was very like his sister, but was tall and strong, almost as tall and strong, Topham judged, as he himself. He clasped the American's hand warmly.

"I am delighted to meet you, señor," he cried. "My sister tells me how much you have done to make her crossing pleasant. Do you go directly to Berlin?"

Topham nodded.

"Then we shall be fellow passengers."

"That will be pleasant. You came to take Miss Ferreira back, I suppose?"

But the Brazilian shook his head. "Not exactly," he replied. "I came to bring her word that she must stop over in Hamburg, only two hours away. Beyond Hamburg we will go on without her."

Without noticing that Topham had paled at his words the Brazilian glanced over the side.

"If you are ready, señor," he remarked, turning back, "perhaps we had better descend to the custom house."

Topham hesitated. "If you'll wait for just an instant," he answered, "I'll be with you. I want to speak to the purser."

Ferreira nodded and Topham disappeared. In a few minutes he was back. A slight bulge above his right breast showed the presence of a packet of some kind and an occasional slight lift of his coat in the fresh breeze showed that it was caused by a big official-looking envelope.

But if either Ferreira or his sister noticed it they did not let the fact appear.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIGHT IN THE RAILROAD TRAIN

THE ride to Hamburg was short and pleasant. There the whole party disembarked; Elsa and the Baroness to remain and Ferreira and Topham to take another train for Berlin.

In the waiting-room Topham made his farewells. Ferreira had gone to see after the baggage and the Baroness had fallen a little behind, so that the two were practically alone.

Briefly, almost coldly, for fear his passion might break away in spite of himself, Topham pressed the girl's hand and bade her adieu.

"Good-by, Señorita," he said slowly. "I have to thank you for a very delightful voyage. Is there no chance at all that I may see you in Berlin? I shall be there till day after to-morrow."

The girl shook her head. If she were piqued by Topham's self-restraint she did not show it. "I must stay in Hamburg for the present," she answered deliberately. "I shall not go to Berlin till much later. So this is really good-by, señor."

"Good-by!" Topham clasped her extended hand; then turned away, afraid to trust himself further.

But the girl called him back. "Señor!" she exclaimed softly. "Señor!"

"Yes!"

"Listen! Be careful. Be very careful. Things—happen—to strangers sometimes. Be very careful, señor, till you are safe in Berlin."

Topham stared. "I don't understand," he said.

"There is nothing to understand—except to be—careful. This country is not always safe for strangers. Be careful—for my sake, señor!"

The girl's voice broke and Topham started forward, flinging resolutions to the wind.

"Elsa," he cried. "I——"

But the voice of Ferreira broke in. "Cab's waiting Elsa," he called. "Come along! Hurry! Or you'll make Señor Topham and me miss our train."

Recalled to himself by the interruption, Topham raised the girl's hand to his lips, then dropped it and saw her led away.

Soon Ferreira was back. "Quick, Señor Topham!" he called. "The train's waiting and we must hurry if we expect to find a vacant compartment."

Many people apparently were going to Berlin, but few of them appeared to hold first-class tickets and the two young men speedily found an empty carriage, in which they ensconced themselves.

Ferreira promptly leaned out of the

Digitized by Google

window. "Here, guard!" he said, holding out his hand. "I don't want to be bothered with other people! You understand!" A piece of silver changed hands and the Brazilian settled back.

Then he turned and nodded to Topham. "We'll try to keep this compartment to ourselves," he said. "I detest traveling shut in with three or four others. I suppose you agree with me."

Topham answered that he did.

An instant later the guards began to run along the platform slamming doors. Just before they reached the carriage that sheltered Topham, two Germans came running up. One of them grabbed the handle of the door and jerked it open and both precipitated themselves into the carriage, despite the Brazilian's strenuous protests.

"We have as good right here as you, *nicht wahr?*" asserted the foremost, seating himself without ceremony. "This carriage is not reserved? What? It has no placard out? No!"

Ferreira fumed. The intruders, scornfully indifferent at first, soon roused to the assault. In the middle of the dispute the train started, but neither Ferreira nor his adversary seemed to note that the case was closed. Hotter and hotter waxed the wordy war. Soon the two men were glaring at each other, shaking their fists and altogether seemed on the point of flying at each other's throats.

Topham watched the contest with twinkling eyes. That notoriously phlegmatic Germans should work themselves into a passion over such a trifle seemed to him amazing. He scarcely believed, however, that the quarrel would end in actual violence and so, though ready to aid Ferreira if need arose, he sat still and looked on, letting a ghost of a smile flicker across his lips.

Instantly, with bewildering abruptness, the other intruder leaned across the carriage, shaking his fist in the American's face and shouted something which Topham did not catch, but which he instinctively knew was insulting.

The lieutenant flushed angrily, but said nothing. The next moment the other launched a blow at his face.

Topham parried and struck back shrewdly. He landed, but before he could follow up his advantage, the other German precipitated himself upon him and in an instant the carriage became a pandemonium of struggling, kicking, fighting men.

Topham was big and strong, but he had been taken unawares and found himself pinned down in the seat in the grasp of men stronger than he. Ferreira, though he struggled, did so ineffectively and both intruders were practically free to concentrate on the American. The bout ended with Topham and Ferreira on the floor with the two Germans sitting on top of them, panting.

The shriek of the locomotive was heard, whistling for a stop. None of the four moved as the train slowed down. Then the Germans stood up, releasing the others.

"We leave here, Herren," said the leader. "This is our address if you wish to carry matters further." They both bowed, flung down their cards and stepped out through the door that the guard opened for them.

Left alone, Ferreira and Topham arose slowly. Topham was humiliated and intensely angry, but he saw the futility of engaging in a further contest at that moment. In fact he scarcely knew what to do. That such a thing should happen in a German railway-carriage, of all places in the world, was to him almost too amazing for belief.

Meanwhile Ferreira had snatched up the cards. "They shall die for this!" he hissed. "*Madre de Dios!* But they shall die! I have friends here. They will act for you too, Señor Topham! Come! Let us seek them!" He made as if to leave the train. But Topham shook his head. "Not for me," he declared. "I don't fight duels, not when I'm on duty, anyhow. Besides, I see little cause. They bested us fairly. Anyhow, it's too late now."

As a matter of fact, the train was moving again.

The Brazilian hesitated. Then suddenly he tore the cards to pieces and flung them out of the window. "So be it, señor!" he acceded.

TOPHAM glanced down at his clothes and found them whole though badly rumpled. Suddenly he started, just as he had on the steamer the night he left New York and thrust his hand into his inner pocket; then dropped it weakly to his side.

At his blank look Ferreira cried out: "You are hurt, señor!"

Digitized by Google

Slowly the color came back to Topham's face. "No!" he said. "Not—not—hurt! You—you don't see an envelope—a big blue envelope—lying around anywhere, do you?" Dazedly he peered under the seats.

Ferreira aided him. "I hope it was not valuable," he ventured.

Slowly Topham shook his head. "Not intrinsically," he answered, "but—but it was—of great personal value to me. Those men must have taken it. I suppose it is too late to find them?"

The Brazilian looked blank. "Dolt that I am!" he cried. "I destroyed the cards!"

Topham nodded. "Probably they would be useless, anyhow," he muttered. "We will say no more about it, señor, if you will be so kind."

The rest of the trip passed uneventfully. Topham was moody and said little and Ferreira did not disturb him.

When Berlin was reached Ferreira leaped lightly from the train. "You will come to my hotel and refresh yourself, señor, is it not so?" he invited.

But Topham shook his head. "Thank you," he replied, "but I must first go to the American Embassy. There is an old friend of mine there—a Mr. Rutile. In fact, I came by Berlin particularly to see him. So you will excuse me, señor."

Ferreira bowed. "Ah!" he exclaimed. "Señor Rutile! He is a friend of yours? A fine fellow, Rutile! *Bon!* I shall do myself the honor to call on you later. *Auf wiedersehen!*"

With a nod and a bow he was gone.

Topham stared after him perplexedly. "I guess you were in it, my friend," he syllabled slowly; "and I guess you think you have won. But the game isn't yours yet, not by a long shot." He paused; then, "God bless her!" he muttered. "She tried to save me!"

CHAPTER V

COUNTESS ELSA DEL OURO PRETO

"BY JOVE, Walter, I'm glad to see you!" Rutile sprang to his feet and hurried forward as Topham entered the office of the embassy. "How are you, old man?" he rattled on. "I heard you were coming, but didn't expect you quite so soon. Must have made a quick trip!"

Topham shook hands smilingly. No sign of distress on account of the missing papers clouded his eyes.

"Pretty quick," he answered. "Glad to get here, however."

"And I'm glad to see you. You've got something for me, haven't you?"

Topham did not answer at once. He had drawn near the table and was staring at a pile of mail matter. "So this is how you get your mail," he said, with apparent irrelevance.

"That! Oh, that isn't official mail! That's mostly letters and papers for tourists sent in care of the embassy. The official mail comes in a private bag. But let's have those instructions."

Topham's eyebrows went up. "What instructions?" he demanded.

"The instructions you brought me from the Secretary of State, of course."

"Oh! How do you know that I have any special instructions for you?"

"The Department tipped it off by cable. Let's have 'em."

But Topham shook his head. "Hold on a minute!" he exclaimed. "I should like to understand this game, if you are at liberty to explain. Why in thunder is the Secretary of State sending you instructions by a naval officer instead of by the regular channels, and why is he sending you instructions at all that he conceals from the Ambassador?"

Rutile threw himself back in the chair. "Search me!" he replied cheerfully. "These are the Lord's doings; they are wonderful in our sight. If I had to guess, though, I should say that this letter treats of a secret service matter which has nothing to do with the Ambassadorial duties—yet."

"I don't understand."

"Of course not. But it's like this. Ambassadors are usually highly-polished, highly-educated, highly-autocratic somebodies who have the money and the wish to put up a front. Their principal duties are to cultivate people, give dinners, and generally jolly things along. Besides, they come and go and can't be expected to know all the ins and outs of the game. We are more permanent and we are expected to know it all and to plan it. If we make a slip, the Ambassador disavows us and we are recalled. We are denounced as presumptuous underlings who have acted without authority. Do you begin to see?"

Digitized by Google

Topham nodded. "Yes! I begin to understand," he said.

"All right! Now let's have the papers."

But Topham shook his head. "I haven't any papers for you, Rutile," he said soberly. "I did have—but I haven't now!"

Rutile stared at him. "Good heavens, man! You haven't lost them, have you?" he cried.

Topham hesitated. "No," he answered, at last. "I haven't lost them. But I became a little alarmed about their safety and so I put them into an envelope and addressed them to John Smith in care of the embassy here. I carried a dummy in my pocket. The purser said they would reach here about as soon as I did and unless I am mistaken they are in that envelope close to your hand on the table there. Allow me!"

THE naval officer reached over and picked up an envelope. He opened it and took out a packet which he handed to Rutile.

"Take your instructions," he said.

Rutile threw himself back in his chair. "Well, I'll be ——!" he observed.

"Very likely!"

"But—but why did you—— What happened to——"

"Nothing. Nothing at all. There were some slight incidents—nothing of any importance."

"Oh! Nothing of any importance. Humph!" Rutile's tones were sarcastic, but he understood that for some reason Topham did not wish to speak frankly and so he proceeded cautiously.

"Voyage quite pleasant, I suppose?" he questioned.

Topham laughed ruefully. "Oh, yes," he answered slowly. "Yes, very pleasant. Delightful, in fact. But, confound it, old man! Do you know, I was seasick? Think of it! Seasick! Why, I haven't been seasick for ten years—not since my maiden cruise in Academy days. But I got it this time good and proper!"

"Ah!" Rutile dropped his eyes and began playing with a paper-weight. "How long did it last?" he questioned carefully.

"Couple of days. It caught me right after dinner the first night out. I went really dizzy. Fortunately it was cloudy and there weren't any people on deck and my shameful secret became known to few. A girl who happened to be there offered me a chair and I lay in it till I could get to my cabin."

"Humph! It's lucky you didn't go to sleep in that chair with these papers in your pocket!"

"I did go to sleep. Had quite—er—nap, I suspect. But the papers weren't in my pocket. The purser had them in his safe."

"Oh, I see!" Rutile laughed shortly. "Of course your humiliating experience spoiled any chance for a flirtation with the charming girl who—she was charming, of course?"

"She was, emphatically!"

"What was her name?"

"Miss Elsa Ferreira!"

"What!"

"Miss Elsa Ferreira. Do you know her?"

"Do I? Well—but that can't be all. Were there any more—er—incidents?"

"Well, yes," Topham spoke carefully. "Yes. There was one other small occurrence. I came up from Cuxhaven with her brother."

"Ah! You were—alone—with him?"

"Only for a few minutes. Two other men insisted on butting in to our compartment. Ferreira got quite excited in the effort to keep them out, but they would come in. Of course, they had as much right as we did. But he wouldn't stand for it and actually came to blows with them. In fact I was involved and—I got the worst of it, too!"

With a chuckle Rutile threw himself back in his chair. "Well, I will be hanged!" he observed. "You don't mean you had a regular fight, do you?"

Topham grinned. "Well, not exactly. The intruders simply sat down on Ferreira and me. We weren't in it, really. Then at the next stop they threw down their cards and left the train."

"Their cards? What were their names?"

"I don't know. Ferreira—by the way, he said he knew you—er—lost them out of the window," replied Topham guilelessly. "Later I discovered that somehow I had lost in the scuffle a dummy package I carried.

"Oh! And the lady? What became of her?"

"She stayed in Hamburg. You understand, old man, these things that I've been telling you are mere incidents of travel, of no real consequence. You do understand that, don't you?"

Digitized by Google

Rutile choked. "Oh, yes! Certainly!" he acceded. "Now if you'll excuse me for a moment I'll see just what these instructions are about."

"All right."

Rutile examined the carefully-placed seals, made sure that they were intact and broke them and drew out the papers inside. A moment later he laid them down and looked at Topham curiously.

"Say, old man," he remarked, carelessly, "you never met the Count of Ouro Preto, did you?"

Topham shook his head. "Can't remember him," he answered indifferently. "Why?"

"Oh! I don't know. He's rather in the public eye over here just now. And he's got a mighty fascinating sister."

"Ah?" Topham was not interested.

Rutile got up and put on his hat. "I've got to go up to the War Office," he explained. "If you'll come with me, I'll show things and tell you about the Ouro Pretos. You ought to know about them."

Topham studied the Secretary curiously. "All right," he agreed. "Just as you say."

LAUGHING and chatting, Rutile led Topham down the stairs and up the broad expanse of Unter den Linden. As they went, he pointed out famous men and famous places, with comments, the least of which, if overheard by any one of the stiff-necked German officers they passed, would have brought forth an immediate challenge.

After a while he pointed to an ornate stone pile.

"That's where the pretty Countess Elsa lives," he remarked airily.

"The Countess? Oh, yes! You were going to tell me something about her, weren't you?" questioned Topham carelessly.

"Sure! It's this way. A former Duke of Hochstein was morganatically married to a ballet-dancer. All the Duke's children by his first and royal consort died. His nephews died. All his progeny and near relatives died, except the daughter by his morganatic marriage. She married a Brazilian, the Count of Ouro Preto, Governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul and went with him to live in South America.

"As this daughter had no standing, the ducal line became extinct. The Brazilian and his wife had two children, the present Count of Ouro Preto and the Countess Elsa. They have enormous wealth and have petitioned the Emperor to revive the duchy in their behalf. They have faked up a royal pedigree for their grandmother, the ballet dancer. You see her marriage to the Duke was proper and religious and all that and was only morganatic because the Duke was chief of a mediatized German house and couldn't marry except among his princely, beery peers. If the Ouro Pretos can establish her royal descent, they establish their mother's moral claim to the duchy, and gain a sort of backstairs standing for themselves. Of course the ballet-dancer pedigree is probably faked; everybody says it's faked; the Kaiser probably knows it's faked; but that won't cut any ice if Wilhelm decides to declare it established.

"And everybody is on pins and needles to know whether he's going to do it or not. Ouro Preto has offered to buy back the ducal estates, which were escheated to the Emperor half a century ago, at two million dollars, which is about three times their value, and to spend two million more on beautifying the tiny capital of Hochstein. It's all a matter of price. Lord, Topham! I used to think we had a monopoly of graft on the other side of the water. But we haven't. Not a bit of it. Ouro Preto wants to be a sovereign Duke and he's got the scads to pay for it. It's up to the Kaiser to say whether he bids high enough. And I shouldn't wonder if the Countess Elsa would turn the scale."

Topham looked a little bewildered. "But where does the trouble come in?" he questioned blankly.

"Oh, I don't know. It would take too long to explain, but I feel it somehow. There's always trouble when the fair Elsa is on deck."

Abruptly he stopped, caught Topham by the arm and dragged him to the edge of the pavement. "Stand still a minute," he ordered, as he rested his hand on the other's shoulder and raised himself on tiptoe. "Yes, it's she!" he exclaimed an instant later. "You big men will never realize how useful your inches are till you try being a little man in a crowd. You say you have never seen the fair Elsa, Countess del Ouro Preto? Well, you are about to have that pleasure. Yonder she comes, in that red motor."

Digitized by Google

Walter looked where the other pointed. Then something seemed to grip him by the throat.

The motor was very near and he could see its occupants distinctly. They were two in number. One was stout and middle-aged; Topham's eyes passed over her unheeding. The other was *Elsa Ferreira!*

Her eyes met Topham's and a great wave of crimson flooded over her cheeks. The car swept on.

Topham followed it with his eyes, forgetful of his whereabouts, till it was swallowed up. Then suddenly he became aware that Rutile was shaking him violently by the arm.

"What is it?" Rutile's voice was trembling with excitement. "What is it? Brace up, for heaven's sake, Walter," he begged. "People are staring. If you could see yourself! But Great Scott, I don't wonder! Nobody ever looked at me as she looked at you."

"So she is the Countess Elsa!" said Topham dreamily.

CHAPTER VI

"COME BACK IN A YEAR!"

HE NEVER remembered how he got through the next hour. He went from place to place with Rutile, talked and laughed, met men—some of them famous men, too—but he did it all mechanically. His thoughts were with the girl whom he had seen in the automobile—the girl with whom he had crossed from New York—the girl who had told him her name was Elsa Ferreira—the girl who had warned him to be careful.

Clearly she was one of the conspirators against himself, but he did not care. He had given the letter safely to Rutile and was free to act for himself for twenty-four hours—till it was time to leave Berlin.

When at last he was able to escape on a plea of letters that he wanted to present, he did so with an alacrity which he feared Rutile would detect.

Once alone, he lost no time in making his way to the ornate mansion that his friend had pointed out to him as the home of the Ouro Pretos.

Scarcely could he control himself while he waited for a reply to his card. It seemed to him incredible that it had been only that morning that he had parted from Elsa at the steamer.

He turned as the trim servant came running down the stairs and bowed before him.

"The *wohl gebornen Grafin* will receive the Herr Lieutenant Topham," she said. "Be pleased to walk up!"

Topham did so without delay.

As he entered her apartment the Countess rose and for an instant the two stared at each other. Curiosity was in that gaze, for those two had learned much about each other since they had parted. Defiance was in it, for both felt instinctively that their wills were to clash and both were ready for the encounter. The pause was that of two fencers who hesitate before they cross swords. It was for a second only, then the Countess swept forward and held out her hand.

"Mr. Topham?" she murmured. "I am glad to see you!"

Topham bowed as he took the hand in his. She wore a wonderful gown of clinging silk against which her dark beauty scintillated star-like. He could not speak. Her loveliness and what it meant to him took his breath away and held him for the moment dumb.

"But you ought not to have come!" she went on, slowly, when he did not speak. Topham shook his head. "You knew I would come," he declared meaningly.

The Countess flushed and Topham pushed the fight. "Did you not know it?" he demanded.

Changing emotion swept across her mobile face. Surprise, indignation, panic succeeded each other and at last gave place to an expression hard to define. She flushed, trembled slightly, and her eyes drooped before those of the man who still held her hand.

"Yes!" she breathed. "Yes, I knew."

"Ahem!" An elderly lady had risen and come forward and seemed somewhat amazed by the scene. "Ahem! Ahem!" she coughed, and then more violently, "Ahem!"

Elsa started. One would have said that she had forgotten her companion, which was singular for a girl brought up under the duenna system, however much she might have emancipated herself. Then she turned.

"You know the Baroness Ostensacken, Mr. Topham," she said.

Digitized by Google

Topham bowed. "Yes," he said, "I have had that honor."

"*Ach Gott!*" The Baroness seemed confused. "You are welcome, Herr Topham," she declared. "Will you not be seated?"

Elsa led the way to the window beside which two chairs were placed, while the Baroness, waddling back to the seat some distance away, from which she had risen, picked up some fancy work.

The Countess sat down and indicated the chair by her side. "Sit down, Mr. Topham," she invited.

But Topham stood motionless, hand on the back of the chair, looking at her.

"PLEASE send the Baroness away," he said serenely.

Again the girl's face flamed. She rose half-way from her chair, then sat down again, trembling.

"Señor!" she faltered, returning instinctively to her mother tongue. "What mean you? I—I can not receive you without a duenna. It——it is impossible."

"Not to you. To others, perhaps. Send her away—please."

"But it is impos——" She rose. "Baroness," she said, "would you mind looking for a letter from Hermann that I left in the bottom of my escritoire?"

The Baroness rose. Her expression was inscrutable. In reality, she was already so much surprised that her features, incapable of expressing her amazement, had reverted to their former placidity. "Yes! Yes!" she murmured.

When she had disappeared, Elsa turned to Topham. "Now, señor," she said, with more spirit than she had shown since the American's arrival. "I have obeyed your orders and sent away my duenna. True, she is only in the next room, but still we are alone. What have you to say to me to warrant such a demand?"

"You know!" Topham's voice was not quite so steady. "Señorita," he went on, "let me tell you something of myself. I belong to an old Virginia family—one of the F. F. V's., as they call us derisively. My people have lived in Virginia for nearly three hundred years and nearly every one of them had a romance. My great grandparents eloped; my grandfather married my grandmother the day after he met her; my father wanted to marry my mother at first sight of her, but was compelled to wait a year—till he was nineteen. I understand that your heritage is similar; that your father stole your mother from the Duke's palace." He paused and leaned forward.

"When I saw you yesterday, I understood," he went on. "I knew that love had come to me suddenly, as it comes to all the men of my race—suddenly but for all time."

Very slowly and deliberately, the American bent forward and took the girl's face between his palms and looked down at her. "Look at me, Elsa," he said.

Slowly she lifted her eyes to his. He bent forward and their lips met.

"That makes you mine," he said slowly.

She said not a word, but slipped slowly into his arms and nestled against his broad bosom.

Topham tilted her perfect chin upward. "Doesn't it?" he asked with a shade of anxiety in his voice. "You love me? You will marry me—at once?"

Gently she freed herself; then she stood up and faced him. "Yes!" she said. "I love you and I will marry you or no other man." She stepped closer to him and, reaching up, placed both hands upon his shoulders and kissed him. "Yes!" she repeated. "I will marry you—but not soon."

"Why not? I am under orders. I must leave Berlin to-night. Will you come with me?"

"I can not marry you—now. No! That is not true! I can, but I will not. I dare not."

"Dare not! Who prevents?"

"Honor!"

"Honor? Whose honor? Yours?"

"No! Your own! What is mine? What is any woman's when she loves? And I love you. Do you understand? I loved you on the steamer. I never loved any man before. Do you believe me? No—don't answer. I know that you do. I love you and I am careful of your honor—more careful than I would be of my own. Therefore, I will not marry you—soon."

Very straight she stood against the background of palms. Topham, slow of thought as he was, felt vaguely that she had stood thus rigid through the life that beat around her. But he was determined, too. Stubbornness rose within him.

But before he could speak she flung up her hand. "No, don't say it!" she begged. "Don't compel me to yield. You could do it. No other man ever bent me; but

Digitized by Google

you—you could break me! But it is best not to do it. Believe me, you will be sorry if—— Look you, señor. For years I have lived but for one thing and that thing is close to my hand. Yet I would give it up for you and count it gain to do so if others were not involved—others who rely on me—others to whom I have passed my word. And yet, I will give it up if you ask me. What is a woman's word, after all? Shall I give it up?"

Topham shook his head. "Not if you have passed your word. My wife's word is mine!" he answered, with splendid egotism.

The Countess smiled, but tenderly. Perhaps she noticed the egotism and was proud of it.

"Then," she said. "I can not marry you soon. It will take a full year to redeem my word, and until that is done I can not marry you. Perhaps"—her voice broke—"perhaps you will not want to marry me then. But God rules and I can not think he has brought you to me merely to take you away again!"

She paused and clasped her hands above her heart. "You must not even see me during that year," she went on painfully. "No! Believe me, I know best. It must be! Go to your ship and come back in a year if you can. I, too, am going away soon. When the year is up, or sooner, if it be possible, I will let you know where I am. Then, if you care to come to me——"

"Come? I would——"

"Be not too sure. A year is a long time. No! I do not doubt you. But—but—kiss me once more, Walter! On the lips! Kiss me! And then leave me, for this is good-by!"

CHAPTER VII

LILLIAN BYRD

THOUGHTS elsewhere, Topham walked slowly through the crowds that thronged the zoölogical gardens. He rested his hand on the back of a vacant chair and stared at the crowd. Hundreds of people were passing him every minute, but he knew none of them. He could not hope to see the Countess, of course, and he cared little for any one else. Suddenly a voice broke in upon him. "Ah! Herr Topham! Well found, my friend!" it cried. "You have quite recovered from the affair of the train?"

Topham turned to confront Ouro Preto. "Oh! Quite!" he answered laughing. "And you?"

"But yes! I hope you have suffered no inconvenience from the loss of your papers?" The Brazilian's tones were light, but Topham thought he read a note of anxiety in them.

"Very little," he replied. "They were only of sentimental value, Count."

"Count!" The other smiled. "Ah, ha! You know. My good friend Rutile has told you? Yes! I am Count. But I seldom use the title. I fly higher. Perhaps you have heard?"

Topham nodded and the Brazilian rattled on. "*Bon!*" he exclaimed. "I have good news. Come and rejoice with me. As you Americans say, come and smile with me." He caught Walter by the arm and drew him down the walk to the tables beneath the trees.

"What will you have, my friend?" he demanded, as he dropped into his chair.

"Anything, so long as it's beer," returned Topham lightly. "But, Count, what's your good news?"

"The best. You know what it is I want in Berlin? Yes? Well, the Emperor will see me to-morrow at ten."

Walter caught up the stein which the swift-footed waiter had placed before him. "Congratulations!" he cried and gulped the beer.

Ouro Preto nodded. "Thank you, my friend!" he cried. "It is good to feel that people wish you well. Here in Europe we never know who may oppose. But the United States at least has no concern in this. Eh, friend Topham?"

Topham laughed. "None at all, I'm sure!" he returned. "Hope you'll pull it off all right."

Ouro Preto's strained look relaxed. His sharp, black eyes, directed over Topham's shoulder, took a sudden fixed expression and the American saw that he was intently watching some one.

The swish of a skirt just behind his chair and a faint perfume that stole upon his senses warned him not to look around too suddenly.

When he did manage to turn with sufficient casualness, he saw two ladies and a gentleman taking their seats at a vacant table a few feet away. The man's face was toward him and he recognized him at once.

Digitized by Google

The girls' backs were turned, but something familiar in the pose of one of them set his heart to thumping.

Ouro Preto leaned forward excitedly. "Do you know who they are?" he demanded. "The ladies, I mean. I know the Ambassador, of course, though only by sight."

Topham nodded. "I know one of them," he declared. "She is Lord Maxwell's daughter. The other——"

But the Brazilian was not listening. "Did you see her face?" he questioned. "Hers! The one to the right. She's a wonderful creature! *Dios!* Topham, I must meet her!"

Topham was still staring at the back of the girl. Surely it could not be—and yet—if she would only turn her head a trifle. She did. Topham rose quickly to his feet. "Lillian!" he gasped.

Ouro Preto's voice reached his ear. "Do you know her?" he asked. "Can you present me?"

Topham nodded. "Certainly! If she will give me permission," he answered. "Please excuse me while I recall myself to her."

Topham heart was light as he approached the table of the new arrivals. Lillian Byrd was the last person he had expected to see in Berlin. He had supposed her three thousand miles away at her home in Washington. He had not seen her for two years—not since the day that she had refused to marry him. He had known her pretty nearly all his life, but he had not thought of her as a possible sweetheart until the day when she had come back to her Washington home from college and met him there on his first assignment to Washington duty after leaving Annapolis.

Deliberate in all things else, he, like all men of his family, was impetuous in love and he had spoken to her at once. She had laughed at him, but in a way that invited further pursuit. In fact he told himself she had deliberately kept him in tow until she could find some one better. Unattached young men were scarce in Washington and few girls had a good-looking naval officer utterly to themselves. Miss Byrd did not care to lose her cavalier. For the whole of one season she encouraged him; but when she came back the next Fall after a Summer at Newport, she had changed.

Perhaps it was because she had made many more friends; perhaps it was because she had made some one particular friend; at any rate, she did not care so much for his attention and she showed it. He reproached her and demanded immediate acceptance or final rejection. He got rejection and instantly applied for sea duty, hoping that absence would ease the pain.

Two years at sea had not made him forget. And then in a day, in a moment, it had dimmed. He passed by her chair, then faced her and raised his hat.

"Good-evening, Miss Byrd," he said smilingly.

With perfect self-possession, the girl stared at him; then she held out her hand with a glad smile.

"Mr. Topham!" she exclaimed, with sparkling eyes. "Oh! I *am* glad." That was ever the way with little Lillian Byrd; the little emphasis in her tones always singled out the one addressed and made him feel himself the most important person in her world.

"Let me present you to Lord Maxwell," she went on warmly. "This is Lieutenant Topham of the United States Navy, Lord Maxwell," she finished, with a flash of her marvelous eyes.

Lord Maxwell rose and held out his hand. "I already have the pleasure of Mr. Topham's acquaintance," he declared. "My daughter, Ellen, Mr. Topham."

Topham bowed and his Lordship went on. "We are about to sample an American drink, Mr. Topham," he said, "one highly recommended by Miss Byrd. It is, I believe, known as ice-cream soda. Of course, it is prepared here à la German and I can not speak as to its merits. Will you sit down and tempt fate with us?"

Walter laughed. "I shall be delighted," he said, "but I have a friend with me. If I might present him——"

Lord Maxwell glanced at the table, where Ouro Preto sat.

"Ah, yes, the Count of Ouro Preto. I have heard of him. Present him, by all means."

TOPHAM beckoned and the Count came over. Introductions followed. Lord Maxwell offered Topham a seat beside his own and the ladies made room for Ouro Preto between them.

The ice-cream soda was brought. The English tasted it gingerly; the Americans hopefully. Ouro Preto gulped his and swore that it was delicious.

Digitized by Google

The British Ambassador turned to Topham and plunged into a technical discussion of the future of the airship in war, leaving Ouro Preto to the girls—that is to say, to Lillian, for Lady Ellen, unable to keep up, contented herself with an occasional "Fancy!" coupled with glances full of admiration for the two handsome creatures by her side.

The Englishman, seeing them engrossed, dropped his voice. "I'm surprised to see the Count here," he observed. "He and his sister are to see the Emperor at ten o'clock, aren't they? That's only two hours from now."

Topham started. He had been listening to his lordship, but he had been watching Lillian, wondering how he could have thought her so beautiful. Almost without thinking he was comparing her with the Countess Elsa.

Lord Maxwell's words startled him. He had distinctly understood Ouro Preto to say that his approaching audience was set for the next day and he had certainly said nothing about his sister.

"Not to-night. To-morrow!" he answered. "I'm surprised that you have heard of it. I did not know the fact was generally known."

"It isn't," rejoined his lordship dryly. "And it's not for to-morrow; it's for to-night. I suppose your Government does not object?"

Topham stared. He remembered that Ouro Preto had also inquired as to possible objections.

"Why should it?" he questioned, in some bewilderment. "What has the United States to do with the creation or re-creation of a German duchy?"

Lord Maxwell glanced sharply at the American, as if wondering whether his words were as ingenuous as his tones. For a moment he hesitated; then went on.

"One can never tell," he remarked lightly. "He is an old friend of yours, I believe?"

Topham shook his head, "Not an old friend," he corrected. "I met him only to-day. He seems a very pleasant fellow."

Lord Maxwell choked over the last of his soda. "I—ah—believe he is noted for his—er—affectionate nature," he murmured, when he recovered his voice. "I should like to know whether the Count's friendship for you survives his meeting with the Emperor. Come and see me in a few days, won't you, Mr. Topham?"

Topham smiled. "I wish I could," he declared. "But I'm off to-morrow evening."

"Ah! Is it so? I'm sorry. I should like to have seen more of you."

With a muttered apology, Ouro Preto glanced at his watch; then leaped to his feet with an exclamation. "A most important engagement," he declared. "I must take a cab and hurry. I had no idea it was so late. The ladies have made the time fly, Lord Maxwell," he continued. "I have to thank them for a most delightful hour."

The party of four started for the Embassy on foot, taking their way to where the Charlottenburg Drive cut straight through the noble Tiergarten to the Brandenberger Thor and the streets of old Berlin. A few yards from the zoölogical garden the dazzle of the lamps died away and only the big stars, flaring in the heavens, lighted the broad white road.

Divining the Americans' wish to exchange reminiscences, Lord Maxwell and his daughter stepped ahead, leaving the other two to follow.

Topham wondered what Miss Byrd expected him to say. Not knowing, he said nothing.

However, as they fell to talking, Walter realized that this was not the Lillian Byrd he had known. She was still bright and witty, but she lacked the air of refinement—the refinement of the old South.

"You think I'm changed, don't you?" she demanded defiantly. "Oh, yes you do! You needn't trouble to deny it. I am changed. Goodness knows I've had enough to change anybody. You didn't know that I was that dreadful thing—a lady journalist—did you? I am! On the New York *Gazette*."

"Good heavens! No! You—you don't mean that you are corresponding for a newspaper? How in the world——"

"That's what I do mean. I've been doing it for two years, and working on the *Gazette* is mighty hard on refinement. I can pretend still, if the atmosphere is right. I haven't forgotten the old airs and graces and I put them on at times—when I go back to Washington to see dear Aunt Polly, or when—well, to-night for instance, when I have an object. But they don't fit any more, Walter, they don't fit!"

There was a tremble in the girl's voice that suggested tears and made Topham feel acutely uncomfortable.

Digitized by Google

Quickly the girl hurried on. "The new style comes easy to me," she said; " so easy that I guess it must be nearer my real self than the older one you used to know."

"But—but why—why are you doing this?" asked Topham.

"DON'T you know? Hadn't you heard about father? Really? Well, he lost his place in the War Department and then the panic came along and took his money and then his health failed. It was up to sister Susan and poor silly me to look after him and Aunt Polly. There was nobody else to do it, you see. Sister Susan got a job as social secretary to one of those wild western senators, but nobody seemed to want yours truly. I couldn't get a Government post because dad had been in the service so long that he had lost his residence in Kentucky and of course nobody from the District has a chance for appointment.

"So at last it came down to a choice between seeing dad and Aunt Polly suffer and becoming a reportress—how I used to loathe them! The *Gazette* liked my style and sent me over to write up Europe six months ago. I've lived and dad has had some comforts and I don't think Europe has suffered much. Anyway it's got to take its chance. I made friends with Lady Ellen in England and she invited me to visit her in Berlin and here I am. They like me because I am 'so American'—when I want to be."

"American! I thought you were very English to-night. You had the accent pat."

Miss Byrd laughed, a little harshly. "I always was a good mimic, wasn't I?" she asked.

Topham chuckled. "You surely were!" he declared. "You fooled Ouro Preto completely. He thinks you are English. Indeed, I shouldn't wonder if he thought you kin to Lord Maxwell."

"Nor I," returned Lillian dryly. "You needn't bother to undeceive him, Walter. His belief may come in handy. He's from Brazil, you know, and I'm going to that out-of-the-way country."

"Really?"

"Really! I'm going to do the east coast and perhaps the west coast of South America for the *Gazette*—write it up commercially, you know, in my racy style. When are you going back home?"

"Not for a year, at least, I think. I am on my way now to Tokyo. My ship leaves Brindisi day after to-morrow and I must leave to-morrow night to be sure to catch her. I came overland from Amsterdam and stopped over here to see Rutile, of our embassy. He was in my class at the Naval Academy."

Miss Byrd listened carelessly. "So you are going to Japan, are you? That means San Francisco sooner or later, of course. You'll probably be back in the United States before I am."

"How long will you stay in Berlin?"

"No time at all. I go to England to-morrow and sail for Brazil in a month."

"It's beside the point for me to say that I'm sorry you're going," he answered, "seeing that I won't be here myself. May I call and say good-by to-morrow?"

Miss Byrd hesitated. "You probably wouldn't find me," she declared frankly. "I'm a working woman now and I've got to go and interview two or three fussy old diplomats. I don't know when I'll be at home. But I'm going to be at the American Embassy some time in the afternoon and I'll probably get a chance to say *'auf wiedersehen'* there. Now, good-night!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE COGS BEGIN TO WORK

WHEN Topham called at the embassy the next day to say good-by, he found Rutile bending over a huge atlas, which he pushed aside as the naval officer entered. "Hello, Topham," he called. "I was getting anxious about you. Your train goes pretty soon, doesn't it?"

Topham nodded. "In an hour or so," he answered.

"I thought so and I want to talk to you before you go. And I don't know just how to begin. You navy people have the best of it, after all. You haven't got to agitate your supposed brains. All you've got to do is to fight, and if you get a chance to distinguish yourself the whole country knows it. We diplomats, on the other hand, are valuable in the inverse ratio that we make it known."

"Yes?" remarked Topham languidly.

"Yes!" returned Rutile impatiently. "Suppose we had a war. All you fellows could do would be to whip the enemy,

Digitized by Google

and if you did it you would get medals and prize money and things. But I've prevented at least one war and nobody knows anything about it except the last administration at Washington, and if there's any deader tomb for a man's achievements than the last administration I don't know where it is—unless it's the administration before the last."

Topham fidgeted. He was not very apt at speech. "What war did you prevent?" he asked, at last, seeing that Rutile expected him to say something.

"Oh, none of any special consequence," returned the other sarcastically, "just a little bit of a war—between Germany and the United States."

"You're joking, aren't you?"

"Never less so. His Majesty Wilhelm was working to grab southern Brazil two or three years ago and I checkmated him; knocked his plans sky-high. If I hadn't, we'd have had to fight him or abandon the Monroe Doctrine."

Topham pricked up his ears at the mention of Brazil. Since he had known the Countess he was much interested in the country.

"I met Ouro Preto to-night," he said, a trifle awkwardly.

"Did you? Still hanging on hoping for that audience with the Emperor, I suppose. He isn't likely to get it."

Topham smiled. "On the contrary, he has got it."

"Got it!" Rutile was on his feet. "Got an audience? What the —— do you mean?"

Topham nodded. "The Emperor was to receive him at eleven o'clock last night," he declared.

"You're sure?"

"Well, not entirely. He said the appointment was for ten o'clock to-day, but Lord Maxwell said it was for ten last night and I suspect that Ouro Preto was—er—mistaken."

Rutile sat down again slowly. "So do I," he replied, dryly. "But what I most want to know is, why did he tell you about it?"

Topham laughed. "Oh, he was too full of it to keep still. Pure spontaneousness!"

"Spontaneous fiddlesticks! What did *you* say? What did he ask you?"

"Why, I don't know. Nothing important. Let's see. I believe he said he feared somebody might oppose the restoration of the dukedom and that he was afraid to speak to most people about it, but that he could talk to me because of course the United States had no interest——"

"Oh!"

"I told him of course we hadn't. Queer, though. Lord Maxwell asked me later almost the same thing. Wanted to know whether the United States objected to the Kaiser giving Ouro Preto his toy. As if the United States had any interest in petty German dukedoms!"

Rutile threw up his hands. "Lord! Lord!" he cried. "I suppose you told Maxwell we hadn't?" he queried.

"Of course. What the deuce is the matter with you, Rutile?"

FOR an instant the diplomat stared at his friend without speaking. "Look here, Topham," he said at last. "I want to know whether you are the guileless child I have always supposed you to be or whether you are so infernally deep that even I can't fathom you. Confound you, man, you've had me guessing ever since you got here. And that brings me to what I wanted to ask you."

Topham looked the speaker in the eye. "All right," he said. "What do you want to know? Ask me."

"I want to know what you know about Ouro Preto and his sister. I saw your agitation when you saw the Countess this afternoon. Now Ouro Preto has been confiding in you. I want to know what it all means. There's something big on and I want to know what it is. The United States is really very deeply concerned in this dukedom matter. If the Emperor grants such an honor he will do it only on conditions. What these conditions are I don't know, and it may be important for me to know. You are leaving for Japan and will be out of the way later. Now, can't you tell me anything that would throw light on the matter?"

Topham shook his head. "About the dukedom?" he asked. "Not a thing. Absolutely nothing!"

Rutile hesitated. "I don't want to offend you, old man," he burst out, "but I must go on. There is a big game afoot and the Ouro Pretos may well wish to keep in touch with a naval officer. The Countess Elsa may be fooling you and——"

Digitized by Google

"Stop!" Topham leaped forward. "I don't understand you, Rutile, my friend," he said. "But you are quite right from your point of view and I will tell you all I may. First, though, I must tell you that to-day I asked the Countess Elsa to marry me!"

"Marry you!" Rutile sprang to his feet.

"To marry me," reiterated the navy man steadily. "And she accepted me—provisionally. I am to go away now and come for her in a year. During the year I am neither to see her nor write to her. She said that—that my honor was at stake. I do not know what she meant. Her words, however, are significant. They may confirm your suspicions—whatever they are."

"And yet——"

"And yet I love her and hope to marry her. I tell you this, because I am an officer of the United States, sworn to its service. No naval officer has any right to hold confidential secrets that may be inimical to his country. The Countess herself would be the first to say so. Of course you are at liberty to use what I say in any way the interest of the United States may demand."

"Of course!" Rutile gasped. Topham's words seemed to have dumfounded him. He had intended to denounce the Ouro Pretos—to show Topham certain instructions he had received concerning them and warn him against them.

But the officer's amazing declaration upset his plans. Topham knew everything of importance—and did not care. Very well! Let him dream away his year of probation; he would be far out of reach away off there in Japan and at the end of that time the Countess could be relied on to cast him over.

"Have you seen the Countess to-day?" he questioned. "Does she know that——"

Topham's face flushed. "She told me yesterday that she was leaving Berlin at once," he said coldly. "So I was not surprised to find her gone when I went to her home this morning." He rose. "That is absolutely all I know," he finished. "Now I must be off."

"Not just yet!" Rutile flung out his hand impulsively. "Not until I have thanked you, old man. I know how hard it is for you to tell me all this and I appreciate your doing it. And I want to congratulate you. The Countess is the most beautiful and brilliant woman I ever knew. You will find yourself much envied when the news is known."

Topham took the hand the other extended.

"Thank you, old fellow!" he murmured.

"And," went on the other banteringly, "if I ever suggested that you were slow, I want to take it all back. You're the swiftest ever! To stop over in Berlin two days and carry off the biggest prize in the matrimonial market sure does break the record!"

Topham grinned. "It was rather quick," he admitted. "It's a way we Tophams have." Then he glanced at the clock above the desk. "My hour's up," he exclaimed. "Good-by, Rutile! Good-by, old man!"

WHEN he was gone Rutile stood for a moment gazing out of the window. Then he swore aloud. "It's a —— shame," he muttered. "Topham's the most open-hearted fellow I ever knew, the very sort to take a woman's word for gospel. Great Scott, how does she do it?" He took a turn or two up and down the room. "After all, though," he went on, thinking aloud. "It isn't how she does it. It's why she wants to do it. What use can Topham be to her in Japan? What possible use can he be to her?"

It never occurred to him that the Countess might be in earnest.

CHAPTER IX

MISS BYRD LEAVES FOR BRAZIL

"ARE you really going?"

"Really!" Miss Byrd nodded. "Yes! I'm off to-night. My stay in Berlin has been delightful, largely because you have made it so, Mr. Rutile, and I hate to go. But business is business and this stone doesn't gather any moss unless she keeps on rolling. So——" she paused.

She was pale and her delicate features seemed a trifle pinched; her lips had not their usual redness.

Rutile studied her consideringly. His naturally impulsive nature had been modified by training and was held in bond by an iron will.

"I too have found your stay delightful," he said slowly. "I only wish I could have made it sufficiently so to you to cause you to stay longer in spite of the loss of moss. When shall we meet again?"

Digitized by Google

Miss Byrd looked him frankly in the eyes; it suddenly occurred to Rutile that he had not realized their depth and color.

"Who knows?" she questioned lightly. "If I lose my job, I may have to go back to Washington, and all diplomats have to go there sooner or later to look after their jobs. So we may meet again in Washington—if it is written that we are to meet at all."

Rutile nodded. "If it isn't, it shall be," he declared. "And I don't think it will be in Washington, either; I've got a hunch that we are to—well, see exciting times together. Didn't you ever feel like that about anybody?"

"Often!" Miss Byrd giggled. "I called this morning on the Field Marshal Sweinpeltz and I felt that way the minute I saw him. And it came true within ten seconds. My! You should have heard him swear!"

"Swear?"

"Well, '*Mein Gott*' is swearing isn't it? He said that three times the first question I asked him. Seriously, though, Mr. Rutile, I hope I shall see you again. Just now, I'm bound for Brazil, as you know. Any little commission I can execute for you in Buenos Ayres or Pernambuco or anywhere?"

Rutile moved a little restlessly in his chair. His eyes avoided those of the girl. "Well, yes!" he said. "There is something, but I hardly know how to ask you. It is a little—awkward."

Miss Byrd shrugged her shoulders. "Why should it be?" she asked. "You have thought it? If you have thought it of me, it must be perfectly proper. Therefore, put it into words just as you thought it. I permit you."

"Thank you! I'll take you at your word."

Rutile considered for a moment.

"There are two young Brazilians here," he began, "who came to Berlin some time ago on a peculiar errand. They are the Count of Ouro Preto and his sister. Perhaps you know of them?"

Miss Byrd nodded. "Certainly I do. I wrote them up in my best style a week ago."

"Well," continued Rutile, "what I want to know is the terms that Kaiser Wilhelm has placed upon the reëstablishing of the Hochstein Duchy."

The girl's expression changed instantly. She drew her breath quickly. Rutile's tones hinted a story and a "story" had come to be the great thing in hers as it is in every newspaper writer's life.

"You want to know?" she echoed. "Officially or not officially? As United States representative or as an individual?"

"BOTH! Brazil has a large German population and any dealings between the Kaiser and Brazilians are of interest to the United States. It's a pretty big thing Ouro Preto has asked and if the Kaiser does it, the United States would like to know why. That's official! But there's the unofficial side of it. I have a friend who is here for a day or two—a naval officer named Topham."

"Oh!" Miss Byrd started. "I know him," she added, after an instant's hesitation.

"Really?" Very plainly Rutile was taken aback. He took a moment to consider. "If I had known that you knew him," he went on, at last, "I think I should not have broached the subject, and yet, after all, I think I am justified. I should not be a real friend if I did not try to help him—and he needs help. You will understand, of course, that what I am going to say is confidential."

"Certainly."

"Topham got here yesterday morning. Yesterday he saw the Countess del Ouro Preto on the street. Later he told me that she had promised to marry him! Isn't it the most preposterous——"

"Not at all! Not at all! It's splendid! Splendid! Just the sort of thing Walter Topham would do. It's traditional with his family. Everybody in Virginia knows what the Tophams are. They have run off with their wives—or with other men's—for three hundred years. They are slow and careful in most things, but when they fall in love—really in love—they sweep everything before them. Oh, I know them!"

"But the Countess!"

"We—ll!" Miss Byrd raised her eyebrows and flashed an amused glance.

"Well, why not?" she questioned. "A girl, Countess or not, doesn't often get a chance at a man like Walter and I guess she's not very conventional herself, is she? With her ancestry——"

"But it's not possible!" said Rutile. "She's fooling the boy—playing with him. It's all bound up in some way with t[illegible] dukedom business. She's using h[illegible]

Digitized by Google

though for the life of me, I can't see how. Perhaps I could guess if I knew the Kaiser's conditions, and if I did know them I might save the boy. That's my unofficial reason for wanting to know. If you are a friend of Topham's you will help me."

"Of course! But I'll help you more because you ask me to, for I believe the engagement is *bona fide*, preposterous as it may seem. What do you want me to do?"

Rutile leaned back in the chair. "That depends," he answered. "Perhaps nothing at all. But when you get to Brazil find out all you can about the Ouro Pretos. They're very prominent people. Perhaps the Kaiser's conditions may be known down there before they are up here. There may be a big newspaper story in it, but if there is I rely on you to keep Topham's name out. Again, there may be nothing. But if you'll keep me informed of anything that may develop, whether you print it or not, you may do a service to Topham and also to the United States. Will you do it?"

"Will I? Surely I will."

CHAPTER X

BY THE SHADOWY POOL

"SAY, Topham, I'm mighty glad to see you." Stites, secretary of legation in Tokyo, lifted his wine-glass and leaned across the table. "Mighty glad to see you. A glass of wine with you, old man!"

Topham lifted his glass and smiled. "Thank you," he answered. "It makes a fellow feel good to be welcomed like this. You people have been mighty good to me."

"Oh, well!" Stites laughed. "We'll show you the other side of it to-morrow."

The two young men sat at a little round table at the English Hotel, where nightly the foreigners and the fashionable world of Tokyo dined. Around them were men and women of all types—Germans, English, a few Americans, fewer French, and many Japanese, some in native dress and others looking strangely awkward in European garments. Little dark waiters slipped swiftly, though not hurriedly, through the throng.

Topham took it all in. "It's beautiful," he said. "Beautiful! I've never been to Japan before and it—well, it's overpowering!"

"Of course! Everything is, in this country!" answered Stites.

The lieutenant stared around him. All about were interesting-looking men and pretty women. "Who's that?" he asked. "The tall man at the table to your right?"

"That's Losdon, the British naval attaché. There's the Spanish, just beyond. Most of the attachés dine here. I'll introduce you to a bunch of them after a while. You'll be the whole works at our shop, you know. We haven't had any sort of attaché, naval or military, for six months. And we've needed 'em; needed 'em like the deuce."

"Why?"

"Why what? Why did we need them? Well, you can't play chess without pawns. You fellows are the pawns. We diplomats can't play spy, you know; but you navy and army men are licensed."

Topham raised his eyebrows. "Why not use the natives?" he asked. "Or are they too patriotic?"

"Patriotic nothing! That's all bunkum, just like the jiu jitsu. Japs are no better than any other nation and I guess they're a little worse. They've got cowards and traitors just like other people—maybe more so. But you can't trust traitors, you know; they won't stay hitched. Besides, we need skilled men. The 'chief' has been cabling to Washington for attachés for six months, but the cotillions didn't seem willing to spare anybody until you came. And they sent you in the end by the longest way round."

Topham looked his sympathy. It had been three months since he had left Berlin. The *Nevada*, which he had joined at Brindisi, had dawdled along via Port Said, Aden and Singapore and had reached Manila just too late to enable him to catch the swift direct passenger steamer for Japan and compelling him to take a much slower and roundabout boat.

"I could have come quicker," he admitted. "But the *Nevada*——"

"And so you spent three months in coming by water instead of ten days coming by Siberian railway. And all the while the need for you here was increasing. I understand you speak Japanese, Topham."

"A little,"

"Only a little?" The secretary was disappointed. "That's bad—unless it's only your beastly polite way of disdaining knowledge. Well, you've got your work cut out for you here! The Japs mean to

Digitized by Google

fight us and we have been grossly negligent in preparing for them. We haven't even informed ourselves as to the extent of their preparations. The chief has done what he could, but it hasn't been much."

"You really think they mean to fight?" questioned Topham.

"Of course! Of course! No doubt at all! They want to fight and they will fight. The only question is as to when they'll fight. Japan means to be the England of the Pacific, and she means to dominate China, including Korea and Manchuria. The open door—bah! No Japanese intends to allow it a moment longer than he must. Oh, they'll fight! And they are getting ready to fight now."

TOPHAM listened respectfully. Listening was Topham's long suit. But he did not for a moment believe.

"Is there anything new?" he asked. "Things seem quiet enough in Manila. Of course, I was there for only a day and hadn't much time to pick up details. There was something in one of the papers about some trouble in San Francisco, I believe, but——"

"That's the opening. A sort of gambit, you know. The Japs there claim they have a treaty right to send grown Japanese men to study in the public schools with white boys and girls. It's intolerable, of course! But they are using it as a pretext to stir up bad blood. They're cunning. They are trying to make capital for themselves in Europe and particularly in England. Blood is thicker than water and they'll have to have a mighty good excuse for war with the United States if they want England's sympathy. And what's more," the secretary leaned forward, "I have reason to believe that they are dickering with Germany!"

Topham started and picked up his glass hastily to mask his movement. Since he had met the Countess Elsa, any mention of Germany made his pulse stir.

"Natural enough, isn't it?" he questioned. "Of course Japan would want to be on good terms with Germany. Probably she would like to be on terms with France, too; and perhaps even with Russia. But why should that mean anything against the United States? Frankly, Stites, I'm from Missouri on the Japanese question. You'll have to show me!"

"Events will do that all right," rejoined the other, a trifle grimly. "But, with Germany, it's scarcely a question. Ever since that woman got here——"

"What woman?"

"The smartest, prettiest woman I ever knew, and that's saying something. Say, Topham, did you ever play stud-poker?"

"Well, I've heard of it," admitted the officer, grinning.

"Well, diplomacy is much like that—especially diplomacy as this woman plays it. She has shown all her cards except one—what Germany is to get out of it all. A mighty clever woman, Topham, and as pretty as she is clever."

"Who is she?"

"Well, now, who knows? She calls herself——"

The Secretary broke off and craned his neck, trying to make out more clearly the identity of a little group of people who had just entered the dining-room. "She usually comes here to dine," he went on slowly, and "maybe—yes! There she is! She's the lady approaching—the one in gray, and she calls herself the Countess Elsa del Ouro Preto. Sounds Spanish, but she is really German as they make 'em."

Topham never knew how he got to his feet. There was a roaring in his ears and the lights danced around him. Only one thing held steady—the splendid eyes of the Countess Elsa.

She was coming toward him. Ah, how beautiful she was! How she fitted into the scheme of things in this bizarre Eastern world!

Then she saw him. For an instant the traitor blood ebbed to her heart, leaving her face whiter than man had ever seen it before. Then it rushed back in a crimson tide, burning. But she walked on. Her eyes held Topham's for a second; then wandered indifferently past. Carelessly she turned to the huge blond German who walked by her side—a man with the broad ribbon of the Black Eagle across his breast—and made some laughing remark. Indifferently, without sign of recognition, she passed—passed to where an obsequious waiter held a chair ready.

Topham's legs gave way under him. It needed not the protest of the horror-stricken secretary to drag him down into his chair.

"For God's sake, man! Careful! Everybody is watching you! Do you know her?"

Digitized by Google

Topham shook his head slowly. "I thought I did," he muttered, "but—I do not!"

AT LAST it was over. The intolerable evening had dragged itself to an end. All the while he was longing to be alone—to get time to think what was portended by this amazing apparition of the woman he loved. At last when the throng had thinned, when even Stites had left him, Topham wandered to the edge of the broad terrace in front of the hotel and sat down to think.

The gardens—the wonderful Japanese gardens where all sense of distance is lost—stretched around him, limitless and mysterious. A soft night wind, warm and caressing, whispered of the age-old mystery of the East. From far away rose the murmur of the city stirring in its invisible homes.

Insensibly the calm stole on Topham's senses and his whirling thoughts composed themselves. The Countess had reached Tokyo before him; from what Stites said she had been there for several weeks at least; most likely she had come by way of Russia and Port Arthur.

Why was she there? Had she come because of him, or for some reason of her own? Remembering what she had said of a task that she was working out, he could not but think that her presence in Japan had to do with that task. Besides, she had been surprised to see him; he was certain of it.

If she were on an errand of her own, what was it? He remembered that Rutile had believed that the Kaiser would set conditions for the restoration of the lost duchy; probably the Countess was trying to fulfil these conditions.

Although she had "cut" him in the dining-room, decidedly, unmistakably, the fact had almost ceased to trouble him. She might have very good reasons for not desiring to seem to know him at that moment.

A clatter of clogs on the stones of the terrace and a rustling of garments aroused him and he looked around to find a Japanese maid bowing profoundly in the starlight just behind his right shoulder.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, startled. "What do you want?"

"Ees thees the honorable Meester Topham?" she asked in a high harsh voice.

Topham nodded. "Yes!" he said briefly.

"You look for me, eh?" he questioned inanely.

"He-e-e-sh!" The girl giggled. It struck Topham that there was something artificial about that giggle. It sounded stagy. Besides there was nothing for the girl to laugh at—unless it were himself. He moved uncomfortably.

"The honorable meester want to see honorable lady?"

"Ah!" Topham drew in his breath sharply. So this was it!

"Yes! Yes!" he answered eagerly. "You come from her? Where is she?" The girl bowed humbly. "Honorable gentleman follow!" she commanded, and turned away down a white path that led into the depths of the garden.

Topham followed eagerly. She brought him to the margin of a tiny lake set in the midst of turf that sank like velvet beneath his feet. There, beside a carved statue of an unknown god, she paused, and he paused, too, waiting for he knew not what.

Suddenly the girl stood up, rising for the first time to her full height.

"Walter!" she cried. "Walter! Walter!"

Topham did not speak. He could not. But he held out his arms and drew her to his heart. "Elsa!" he murmured, after a while.

She stirred in his arms. "I love you! I love you!" she murmured. "Ah, do you know that I nearly fainted when you faced me there to-night! Cruel! Cruel! Not to give me warning!"

Topham drew her closer. "I did not know!" he breathed. "I did not know. And yet how could I not know?"

Gently the Countess freed herself. "Sit down," she ordered. "Here, where I can touch you, but not where I can look into your eyes. I—I could not trust myself else. My face burns, dear, when I think how I fell into your arms—and yet I would not have it otherwise. But listen! There is no time. I shall be missed and then——"

"Missed. Who——"

"No one you need trouble your head about. But let me talk. I am here on a political mission—you must have guessed that. I can not let you become involved in it. There are reasons—you will not ask me for them—but there are good reasons why you must not be suspected of any associations with me or my work."

Topham's eyes grew troubled. "Tell me one thing," he begged. "Tell me——"

Digitized by Google

"No! No! I can tell you nothing. I will not lie to you and I can not tell you the truth. You may suspect what you please. It is your right. But you may not ask me anything. It would do no good and might do much harm. That is why I pretended not to know you in the dining-room to-night. That is why I have slipped out to you in this guise. I could not come in any other. It is best that no one should know that you know me."

"May I not meet you? May I not be presented? May I not——"

The Countess's breath came faster. "No! No!" she gasped. "No! No! I could not bear it. Besides, there will be no chance. I leave to-morrow."

The blood flowed back to Topham's heart. Unconsciously his grasp upon the girl tightened until she could have screamed from very pain. "To-morrow!" he muttered.

"I must!" Elsa was sobbing. "I must! Duty calls. I have to leave for America—for Washington—for your own country, where I must work out my task. Where it will lead—what its consequences will be—God knows! I would give it up if I could, but I am bound by a promise to the dead. Dead lips can not give back the spoken words and I must go on. Ah!"—she turned and flung her arms fiercely around the man—"Ah! I am mad, insane! But I love you! I love you, Walter!"

Over the shadowy pool the night-mist hung, wavering in the starlight. The stones and grass were wet with dew. Topham saw them sparkling iridescent on the black island that rose in the middle of the lake.

Suddenly the woman sprang up. "They will miss me," she cried. "I must go. There—there is danger!"

"Do not go! Not yet! Stay a little—only a little. It is so long—so long——"

"I must! I must!"

CHAPTER XI

STRANGE DOINGS IN 'FRISCO

WALTER TOPHAM was nearing San Francisco. His stay in Japan had been very brief. Long before he had had time to become acquainted with conditions in that country or to make certain that Stites' suspicions as to the intense activity in the Japanese arsenals and dockyards were justified, he had been summoned back to Washington.

Loud was Stites' disgust when he heard of Topham's impending departure. "I might have known it," he cried. "It's just like those fellows! They've got about half the navy in Washington already and want more of it."

"I think they want me for a special reason," suggested Topham.

"Oh, I suppose so. Devilish queer about that Countess, isn't it? I wonder what she really was up to. Oh, say, look here, Topham. Your going is lucky in one sense, because you can do something for me—and for the Government—on your way. Do you remember that Jap colonel—Hakodate his name was—whom you met here the day after your arrival?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Would you know him again?"

"I might. I'm not certain. Why?"

Well, I told you we had native spies. One of them brought in word this morning that Colonel Hakodate sailed a week ago for San Francisco as an immigrant and that he carried letters to one Hiroshimo, who keeps a Jap restaurant on Market Street, near Kearney. Of course the man may be lying and of course you may say that there's nothing in it even if he's telling the truth. But it looks dashed funny to me and I wish you'd just drop in at that restaurant when you get to San Francisco and snoop around a bit. See if you can spot Hakodate there and see what he's up to."

Topham promised.

That had been a month before and San Francisco was now close at hand. Soon the channel and range lights grew into visibility. Then the steamer slid through the heavy rolling waves of the bar into the calm of the outer bay. Fifteen minutes more and it passed through the Golden Gate and the great city lay outstretched before it.

Topham looked at his watch and wondered whether he would get ashore in time to catch the midnight train for the East.

Scarcely had he formulated his wish, when a boat came alongside and a voice hailed the deck.

"This is a launch from Fort Alcatraz," it explained. "Is Lieutenant Topham on board? I've been sent to land him. Here's the permit from quarantine."

In five minutes Topham was in the boat,

Digitized by Google

speeding shoreward. "Orders from Washington," explained the officer in charge. "Your berth has been engaged on the twelve o'clock train. It's nearly nine now. Meanwhile I'm at your orders."

"Thank you. I'll go to San Francisco, please. I have an errand to discharge. Please land me at the foot of Market Street."

Once landed in the Western city, Topham said good-night and started up Market Street, reading the signs on the lamp-posts as he went.

Stites had not been able to give him the number of the restaurant for which he was looking, but he knew that it was on Market Street just below Kearney.

AS he stepped briskly along it occurred to him that there was an unusual stir in the city, though, not being familiar with its ordinary state, he had no means of comparison. Still, it seemed to him that conditions could not be altogether normal. The people were not moving about their business, but were congregated about in groups here and there. Now and then there would be a sudden movement to one point or another, but never for any reason that Topham could see.

As a matter of fact he paid little attention. He was interested in the task that Stites had set him—a task for which the three hours available before his train left for the East might easily prove anything but superabundant. When at last he caught sight of a brilliant sign, "Hiroshima, Japanese restaurant," his faint curiosity as to the crowd disappeared.

But before he could enter the portals of the restaurant, a workingman—nearly as big a man as himself—barred his way.

"You ain't goin' in that Jap hash house, are you, friend?" inquired the stranger.

Topham halted. "That was—er—my idea," he responded. "Why not?"

"There is a strike on; see? An' the Japs are boycotted; see? They're playing the —— with hard-workin' Americans. And we ain't goin' to stand for it. You want to keep away from there, mister!"

Topham hesitated. His interlocutor was not alone; half a dozen other men, loafing near, were evidently fellow pickets. Topham did not want any trouble during the few hours he was to be in the city. Yet he was resolved to enter the restaurant. The sight of two policemen on guard at the door, decided him to force the game.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I must go in." He pushed by and stepped to the door. As he went he heard the men cursing behind him.

He seated himself and ordered a meal from a bill of fare presented him by a stocky Japanese waiter who seemed not at all alarmed by the situation. Perhaps he had grown hardened to it.

When the waiter had disappeared toward the back of the place Topham stared around him.

Whether because of the hour or because of the strike, the restaraunt was almost empty. Only two guests besides himself were in the place and neither of these seemed to be enjoying his meal. Another waiter was hovering over them, and behind the cashier's desk sat a Japanese. As Topham looked, this man raised his head and the naval officer recognized him. It was Colonel Hakodate!

The thing took away Topham's breath for an instant. Almost he became a convert to Stites' prognostications of war. For it was inconceivable that a samurai of the bluest Japanese blood, akin to the Emperor himself, and an officer of the Imperial army, should turn restaurant-keeper except for grave reasons.

Little time, however, was given him to think. From the street without came a sudden outcry, a sort of chilling yell that brought all in the place to their feet. Another instant a dozen stones crashed through the plate-glass windows. Then came a rush of feet and a crowd of men leaped into the broad doorway. Topham saw the clubs of the two policemen rise and fall like flails and saw them forced backward, still fighting.

It was all so sudden, so unexpected, that the head of the crowd was actually in the room before he realized what was happening. Then he sprang forward with a yell to the aid of the police.

But he never reached them. The Japs were quicker than he. Before he had taken two steps, he heard the crash of firearms and saw Colonel Hakodate and his two waiters pouring shot after shot into the mass of the mob.

"*Banzai! Banzai!*" yelled the Colonel.

It was only for a second. Then the policemen went down and the mob rolled in.

Digitized by Google

The Japs disappeared and Topham, snatching up a chair, breathlessly defended himself against a score of brawny men who swarmed upon him.

For half a minute he held them at bay. Then a paralyzing blow on the arm sent his chair crashing from his hands and he saw death staring at him from a score of maddened eyes.

But before the blow could fall a woman burst through the circle and flung herself upon him. One arm she threw around his neck and threw the other up into the faces of the mob.

"Stand back! Stand back!" she cried. "He's one of us!"

Topham saw the fire die out of the eyes that circled him.

"Out of here! Quick!" the woman was clamoring in the lieutenant's ear. "Quick! The police are coming. Quick!"

But Topham stood still. "Elsa!" he cried. "You!"

"Yes, I! I'll explain later. But come now! *Dios!* Come!"

And Topham went.

CHAPTER XII

THE TEST

POWER was coming back into Topham's numb arm and by main strength he forced his way through the crowd, making a path to the door for himself and Elsa. Once through the aperture, progress was easier, though not too easy, for the crowd outside was packed and jammed about the door. At last, however, he was free, just as the clatter of hoofs on the granite told that the police patrol had arrived.

The Countess clung to his arm, but made no attempt to speak. She was dressed plainly, like a factory worker of the poorer class. She looked much older than when he had seen her last and he guessed that some of the shadows on her face had been purposely put there by skillful hands. Her hair puzzled him at first, but he soon guessed that its grayish tinge was due to powder.

The mob was dispersing, fleeing in all directions, and the police were plowing their way through it toward the wrecked restaurant.

Topham glanced about him, caught sight of the telegraph office that he had noted half an hour before and quickly drew the woman up the steps and inside.

As he turned toward the table with its pile of blanks, she caught him by the arm. "What are you going to do?" she gasped.

Topham looked at her with infinite sadness in his eyes. "I am going to telegraph to Washington that the anti-Japanese riots in San Francisco have been provoked by German agents for the purpose of embroiling Japan with the United States, for some end that I can not guess. Afterward, I should be glad if you can spare me a word. I owe my life to you!"

The Countess took no notice at all of his last words. Her attention was concentrated on what had gone before.

"You will not send that despatch!" she pleaded.

"I must. You know that I must."

"But—but—as you say—I saved your life. If it had not been for me you would not be alive to send anything. I think I have the right to ask you not to send it. Please! For my sake!"

The sweat crept out on Topham's forehead, but his tones did not falter. "I must!" he answered.

"Yet listen first to me! I have a right to ask you at least to listen." Her voice, deep and rich, had lost none of its intensity, nor her glorious eyes any of their appeal. "Grant me at least ten minutes," she begged. "You will not refuse the first thing I ever asked of you!"

Topham glanced up to where a clock-face marked the hour. "No," he said gently, "I will not refuse to listen to you. But I can give you but little more than the ten minutes you ask. My train leaves in an hour and the ferry is some distance away. I will listen, but I can not yield."

Some great emotion seemed to sweep through the woman's frame. She shivered, though the night was not cold; her lips trembled; her eyes stared blankly. Then, quick as it had come, the stress vanished and her features shaped themselves into a mocking smile.

"So!" she said bitingly. "So all those pretty things you said to me in Berlin and in Tokyo were false! You amused yourself, perhaps?"

Topham shook his head. "They were

Digitized by Google

true," he affirmed. "They are still true. You know it!"

HIS directness was disconcerting. An appeal to one against one's self usually is. But the scorn in the woman's eyes did not lessen.

"Yet you refuse?"

"Yes! I refuse!" A flash of passion trembled in Topham's tones. "God!" he cried. "If only I did not have to refuse!"

"So you say," she jeered.

Topham glanced around. The long room was nearly empty and what occupants it had were collected at the other end at the broad windows, staring out at the street.

"Elsa," he said swiftly, "I do not know in what plot you are engaged. I can not conceive what it may be. But I am very certain that any plot in which Germany and Japan are concerned; any plot that leads German emissaries to stir up mobs to murder Japanese in San Francisco——"

"It was not murder!" pantingly.

"Was it not? I hope not. But that was the plain intent——"

"No! No! The Japanese knew. They were ordered——"

"Of course! I knew that. Colonel Hakodate would not have been there except under orders. Yet it was murder——"

"No! It was war!"

Topham paused. "Perhaps," he acquiesced, after an instant. "Perhaps. Murder seems to me no less murder when done by the orders of the Emperor. But it is not for me to judge. Nor will I try to question you. God knows I shall have enough to tell the President without taking advantage of your confessions."

"But—but if I tell you that your President would not be interested? If I tell you that this is not at all an affair for the United States? What then? Will you believe me?"

"Believe you? As a man, yes! As an officer of the United States, no! It is not for me to believe or disbelieve. It is for me to obey. But, pardon me, the ten minutes are up. I must write my despatch and go."

He turned away, resolutely enough, to all appearances. His tones were even and his manner calm.

With a sudden movement she flung her hand across the telegraph blank.

"In Berlin you asked me to marry you," she breathed. "Do you still wish me to do so?"

Topham's eyes flamed. "Marry me! Marry me!" he groaned. "God knows I want it more than—more than——"

"Then do not send that message and I will marry you at once—within the hour! I will abandon my plans; give up my life-work; break my oath to the dead! I will be yours to do with as you will! Only—only I ask—forget what has happened here to-night. Do not wire it! Do not speak of it! Let it be as if it had never been. Am I not worth it, beloved? Ah, don't you know that I will make up to you for it all?"

Her face was very near his; her glowing eyes beamed into his brain; the soft fragrance of her breath fanned his cheeks. But he set his face like flint.

"No!" he said.

"Then tell the President what you like when you see him. But do not telegraph."

"No!"

The Countess drew back. "Then," she said, with a break in her voice, "then—good-by!"

"Good-by?"

"Good-by—forever. That despatch will mark the end for you and me. I beg, I implore you not to send it! But I warn you, too!"

Slowly but decidedly Topham shook his head. "God help me!" he breathed, "I must send it!"

Swiftly, as if desiring to put himself beyond the reach of temptation, he snatched up the pen and scribbled a score of hasty words. Then he hurried to the clerks' grating, thrust it in and, turning, staggered blindly toward the door.

But Elsa was waiting for him and in her eyes he saw a light he had never thought to see again. Heedless of who might see she stretched her arms wide.

"Thank God! Oh, thank God that there is one true man left!" she cried. "I thought all men were liars till you showed me to the contrary. I *had* to try you, beloved! I had to do my best to stop you, and I did do my best. But I was praying all the while that I might fail! And I thank God I did fail! Take me, beloved, and do with me what you will. I can trust you with anything in the world!"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRESS AND THE PRESIDENT

VORST, editor and publisher of the New York *Gazette*, stood in the reception-room at the White House and looked the President in the eyes and the President stared back at Vorst as relentlessly. Neither troubled to show courtesy. Each hated the other. Vorst had published vitriolic things about the President and the President had retorted more rarely but more bitterly. Each really considered the other a menace to the country.

"You wished to see me, Mr. Vorst?" asked the President.

Vorst bowed. "Yes. Read this, please!" He held out a paper.

The President took the paper and ran his eye down it. Then he read it again more slowly.

"The importance of this lies in what it infers rather than in what it says," he asserted sternly; "and both depend on the man who wrote it. I do not recognize the signature."

Vorst nodded. "It is a cipher signature," he explained. "The whole message came in cipher. The writer is Miss Lillian Byrd, of this city. You know her, I believe."

The President nodded. "I know her very well," he said, "and I have the greatest confidence in anything she may say. Where is she? How did she come to send such a message?"

"She is a *Gazette* correspondent. She has been doing some work in South America for the *Gazette*. You may have read her despatches from there. They have been very significant. Three weeks ago she left Buenos Ayres for New York on the steamer *Southern Cross*. Last night she wirelessed this despatch in code via Guantanamo. I got it in New York at three o'clock this morning and left for Washington with it an hour later on a special train."

"You have not published it?"

"No."

"Why not? It is a good story. It would cause a sensation. Why do you not publish it, Mr. Vorst?"

Vorst's face grew darker. "Because, Mr. President," he grated, "because I am an American like yourself. I know that you think I cater to anarchy for the sake of money. I think that you—but, no matter; I did not come here to bandy words. Frankly, I dislike you, Mr. President, and I would never have brought that message to you if any other course had been possible. I distrust your policies and disapprove your acts. But you are President and the subject matter of that despatch clearly falls within your province. Therefore I bring it to you. Take it, not as the service of a friend, but merely as that of one who is willing for the moment to sink personal enmity for the sake of his country."

The President listened quietly while Vorst spoke.

"Agreed!" he answered. "We will work together in this; later, if need be, we can again lock horns. You have done neither more nor less than your duty, Mr. Vorst. On its face this despatch," he slapped it across his hand, "is incredible. As a theme for a romance it would be admirable. As a yellow-journal feature-story it might sell a few copies of the *Gazette*. It would not do more. The only people who would believe it would be those who already know it to be true—if it is true. Yet—if it is true—to publish it would do great harm, for it would show these very people that we know of their plans. So I will ask you to suppress it altogether. I will tell you that I believe it is true. I received other information only last night that convinces me. Now, Mr. Vorst, I must see Miss Byrd at the earliest possible moment."

Vorst nodded. "I thought you would want to do so," he answered. "That was why I insisted on seeing you at once. Miss Byrd's steamer ought to pass outside the capes of the Chesapeake bound for New York some time to-night. Can you send a torpedo-boat or a cruiser out to intercept her?"

The President turned to his secretary. "Ask Secretary Metson to come here, Mr. Loren," he ordered. "He is in the Cabinet room."

LOREN slipped into the Cabinet room. In an instant he was back. Close behind him came a stout, sandy-mustached man, who nodded to Vorst with an air of surprise.

The President, however, allowed no time for explanations. "Mr. Metson," he questioned instantly, "have we any small vessels at Hampton Roads that can go to sea without delay?"

Metson nodded. "Four or five, I believe,"

Digitized by Google

he answered promptly. "Two destroyers, one gunboat, one protected cruiser——"

"Order the swiftest to be ready to leave the instant an officer reaches her with orders. Can you put your hand on Lieutenant Topham, whom you brought to me last night, or is he out of reach?"

Metson looked undecided. "I think he is in the Department now," he asserted. "If Mr. Loren will telephone over——"

"Do so, Loren."

Topham was easily found and in less than five minutes was in the room.

The President went straight to the point. "Mr. Topham," he said, "an American lady, Miss Byrd, a correspondent of the *Gazette*, will pass the entrance of Chesapeake Bay on the steamship *Southern Cross* some time to-night. I want you to take train—a special if need be—— Find out about trains and order a special at once, Mr. Loren," he flung over his shoulder. Then, "You will proceed immediately to Fortress Monroe, Mr. Topham, go on board a destroyer that will be waiting, and intercept the *Southern Cross* and bring Miss Byrd here at the earliest possible moment. She will probably be willing to come. If not, you must try to persuade her."

"She will come, Mr. President. I know her personally."

"So much the better. I am sending you, Mr. Topham, because of your connection with the case. The Count Ouro Preto is on board the *Southern Cross*. He must not be allowed to interfere!"

"He shall not be, sir."

"Miss Byrd sent this despatch to the *Gazette* by wireless last night. Mr. Loren will give you a copy of it. From the position of the vessel at that time, you can calculate where she will be to-night. Probably you can locate her by wireless. Do you understand?"

"Fully, sir."

"Then consult with Mr. Loren and Mr, Metson and go! Lose no time!"

CHAPTER XIV

A LETTER FROM THE KAISER

LEANING alternately to right and to left to meet the roll of the ship, Ouro Preto made his way along the deck of the *Southern Cross*, his eyes fixed on a vacant chair by Lillian Byrd's side. Miss Byrd saw him coming and longed to escape, but could not do so.

She did not wish to talk with the Count, although she had come aboard at Buenos Ayres for the express purpose of obtaining from him certain knowledge that she felt sure he possessed. For three weeks she had been working quietly and unobtrusively, but effectively, to gain it, and when she saw him approaching she felt that success was about to crown her efforts.

Yet, in that moment of prospective triumph, contrition seized her and she looked down, panic-stricken, striving to gain time.

Dismayed, she asked herself why she should hesitate. It was not from any pity for Ouro Preto. Pity is only for the weak, and Ouro Preto was not weak. Nor did her hesitation arise from sympathy or friendship. Miss Byrd was experienced enough to know that no woman could feel either sympathy or friendship for Ouro Preto except at her peril; besides, she told herself that she did not even like him. His attitude toward her irritated her; and his pride, based on his father's wealth and his mother's ancestry, was as offensive as it was unconscious.

Nor was she ashamed of her work; at least, she had never been so before.

Miss Byrd did not know why she hesitated, and the fact that she did hesitate both angered and frightened her.

Ouro Preto did not realize the situation. His admiration for Miss Byrd had begun long before in Berlin, and had steadily increased since the day he had come on board the *Southern Cross* and found her and had grown intense as the voyage wore on. When the ship reached Barbados, at which island he had expected to transfer to his own yacht, which had come from Hamburg to meet him, he had been unable to tear himself away from the fascinating American, and had decided to go on to New York and sail for Germany from there. Again and again he had striven to place his relations with her on a sentimental footing, but always she evaded him and the closing days of the voyage found him uncertain as to her feelings and determined to bring matters to a climax. He never guessed that it was on just this that Miss Byrd was counting.

When he reached her chair he stood over it until he forced her to raise her eyes. Then he bowed. "May I sit down?" he asked.

Digitized by Google

For a moment the girl did not answer. Then she put out her hand and pushed the chair near her an inch or two farther away. "The chair belongs to the ship and the deck belongs to whoever occupies it," she replied coldly, though her heart was fluttering wildly.

The smile faded from Ouro Preto's face. "Oh, but why are you so cruel?" he cried wildly. "What have I done to anger you? Is it that my love offends you?"

Miss Byrd gasped. "I am not offended at all," she answered briskly, ignoring the suggestion in the young fellow's last words. "I am merely tired—bored, if you will—by the length of this never-ending voyage. I am a very bad-tempered young woman, señor, and if you knew me at all well you would realize how unpleasant I am likely to be when I am bored." The girl spoke hurriedly, feeling for words which would not be too rude and which might yet stave off the proposal which she felt was imminent.

"I do not believe it, señorita," he babbled. "You are altogether sweet and lovely—fit for a Duchess. And I can make you one, señorita! Great things are impending. A few weeks more and I will be a Duke and——"

His words steadied the girl. "Stop!" she cried. "I will not listen. I am not the unexperienced girl you think me! I am——"

"You are the one woman for me. You do not love me, señorita. I know it. But I can teach you to love me if you will give me the chance. And I can give you much—much. I do not speak of money—no! no! do not think of it! Money is nothing! I can give you more than money. I can give you position, rank, fame."

Miss Byrd forced a laugh. "Where?" she demanded. "In Brazil?"

"In Brazil, yes, at first; then where you will. Listen, señorita; my mother is descended from the princely German house of Hochstein, now extinct in the male line. The Emperor is about to revive its honors and vest them in me—in me, do you understand. And this is not all. I am at the head of a great movement. Since I was a boy of sixteen I have been laboring for it and now at last the time is ripe. Only one obstacle remains and I am about to sweep it aside. Then—then——"

The man's eyes burned. His breath came hot and fast. His tones carried the intoxication of assured success.

"It is a great game and a great stake," he hurried on. "A great game! Its web involves four continents; it stretches from Brazil across both the Atlantic and the Pacific and far to the northward. And at its center I sit. Strand by strand I have woven it and tested it. It can not break. Why, see here!"

He thrust his hand into his pocket and drew out a paper, which he tore apart with shaking fingers. "See!" he cried. "See what the Emperor has written. With his own hand he has written it! Read! Read!"

The girl pushed away his hand. "No! No!" she cried. "I won't read! I won't listen!"

But the man would not be denied. "Read! Read!" he clamored. "See what the Emperor promises."

Determinedly he thrust the paper before her eyes and held it there while its words burned themselves into the girl's brain, never to be forgotten.

"You see! You see!" he cried.

MISS BYRD drew back. Half-understood facts suddenly blended into a comprehensive whole. Rutile's fancies had become facts—the facts of a great political conspiracy. It was not merely what Ouro Preto had said; taken alone that might be set down as the vaporings of a dreamer who took wishes and fancies for facts. But dreamers do not receive letters such as this from the Kaiser, and their dreams are not corroborated by a horde of apparently unrelated facts such as Miss Byrd had in her possession.

The man was still speaking. "Only one thing remains in my way now," he triumphed. "Nothing but these cursed Yankees can oppose me. And now I am going to draw their teeth. Too long have they assumed to control the destinies of all the Americas. Too long have they stood in my way. Now—now I am about to eliminate them—to crush them if they dare to interpose! Thank God you are English——"

"But I am not English!"

The man started back. "Not English!" he babbled. "Not English! Are you not the niece of Lord Maxwell?"

"No! I am—I am—Count, I have deceived you. I have let you think me English. I knew you had a secret and wanted to wheedle it out of you. I am ashamed—

Digitized by Google

ashamed! I don't know why. I never was ashamed of my work before. But I am now. You can not say anything too bad of me. I deserve it all." The girl bowed her head and her shoulders shook.

The man caught her wrist and spun her around to face him. "You are a Government spy?" he demanded desperately.

The girl shook her head. "No, I am a newspaper woman."

The man's bowed shoulders suddenly straightened. Hope sprang up in him. "A newspaper woman! Then—then—come! That is not so bad. You can resign and marry me."

But Lillian shook her head. "No! No! I can not," she murmured. "I am sorry, but—I can not."

Ouro Preto stared at her. "Well, let that go for the moment. Later—But now—See! I am rich, very rich! I will pay you two—three years' salary and you will forget all that I have said. It is a bargain? No?"

But the girl bowed her head miserably. "Oh!" she cried. "I have fallen low—low! I have said you could say nothing too hard for me to hear, but I never dreamed that you—you of all men—would offer me money; that you should think me for sale! I have had to earn my own living and I have done it. I have gone on from step to step, not realizing. But, believe me, I never did anything quite so indefensible as this before. I never tricked a man's love to get his secret before!"

"Then you will not forget?" he asked.

"How can I?" whispered the girl miserably. "If I only could! But I can't! I can't! I can resign and I will. I shall give nothing to the paper about you. If your secret were almost anything but what it is, I would repeat it to no one. But—" the girl's figure straightened—"you are plotting against my country! I must warn those who should know. I must! You see that, don't you, Count?"

Pleadingly she leaned forward and gazed up into his face.

"You would not have me a traitor, would you?" she questioned pitifully. "I don't know just what you and your Emperor are plotting, but I know that I must report it. Why, Count, my ancestors have been Americans for nearly three hundred years. They have been soldiers, statesmen, patriots. I can't be the first of my line to play the traitor. I can't let the Emperor plot against my country without warning!"

The man forced a laugh. "Plots! Plots! What are you talking about? There is no plot. Only a—a—oh, nothing at all. Plots! What sort of a plot could Germany carry through against the United States? Your strenuous President would smash any plot in a moment, even at the cost of war. And do you think Germany wants war? No, no, a thousand times no! It is only a diplomatic triumph that I seek to win. To lose it would discredit me for all time. You do not wish for that, señorita! Your Goverment needs no help from you. Let it play its own game."

But the girl shook her head. In her mind's eye she saw the web of which Ouro Preto had spoken. Wide and strong it stretched over half the world. Beneath its shadow she could see the flash of cannon and the smoke of ruined cities, with half the world bathed in blood.

The vision faded. Once more she saw the swaying deck, flashing waves, the masts and funnels tracing wide arcs across the blue firmament. Ouro Preto was still speaking; he was asking her something—something that she could not understand. With new eyes she looked upon him. All fascination, all liking, all friendship had vanished. She could see only the enemy with whom she must cope. Blindly she struggled to her feet, pushed past the man's opposing arms and fled away to her stateroom.

That night she sent the long code message that Vorst showed to the President.

CHAPTER XV

A FRIEND IS HEARD FROM

DUSK was falling when the destroyer *Watson* turned her nose seaward and sped away from Old Point with all the vigor of her quadruple-expansion engines. Topham had climbed on board and full speed ahead had been signalled.

Lieutenant Quentin, commanding the *Watson*, acknowledged his salute with due ceremony. "I have been instructed by telegraph to proceed to sea under your orders the moment you arrive, Mr. Topham," he announced.

"Very good, Mr. Quentin. Please run to the capes of the Chesapeake, keeping as far

Digitized by Google

south as possible. Have your wireless ready for use as soon as we get outside of the bay. Meanwhile I will go over the charts with you and lay a course."

Down in the cabin they bent over a chart spread upon the table. Topham punched a small hole in it with the point of his pencil.

"The *Southern Cross* was at this point at 10 p. m. last night," he said. "She was bound for New York and was running, presumably, about twelve knots an hour." He ruled a pencil line on the map and scaled off 220 miles along it. "She should be about here," he decided, "at nine to-night. Twenty miles an hour will bring us to the same point at about the same hour. Therefore, Mr. Quentin, please lay your course for that spot as soon as we get to the capes."

"Anything else?" asked Quentin.

"Not just yet. Our errand is to find the *Southern Cross* and bring ashore one of her passengers. So, in good time, you can give orders to try to raise her by wireless. That's about the only way outside of plain bull luck that we could possibly locate her to-night."

"Right you are! Say, the Secretary must be in a horrible hurry to reach her. She'd be in New York day after to-morrow.

"It's the President and not the Secretary, and he is in a hurry indeed. The passenger —a lady—sent a wireless ashore last night and the message reached the President this morning. The whole affair is to be kept a strict secret."

"Of course. The lady'll be expecting us, then?"

"I think not. I'm pretty sure not. But she'll be glad to come, I think. She's a newspaper woman—a Miss Lillian Byrd. You know her, don't you?"

"Know her! I should say I did! Wasn't I sweet on her? Why! You old hypocrite, you know her yourself."

The destroyer heeled far over; then rolled back again. Her long body groaned, writhing, and began to pitch desperately.

QUENTIN rose. "We've reached the capes, evidently. I'll go on deck and take charge." He glanced at the chart. "East-southeast, a little east!" he repeated. "Make yourself comfortable. I'll notify you if anything turns up."

But Topham shook his head. "No, I'll come on deck, too," he said.

Steadily the *Watson* thrashed eastward into the deepening night, not rising on the waves but cutting through them and getting the full benefit of their differential lift. Steadily, too, the wireless operator sent his call across the waters.

It was two hours before he got an answer. Then, as ordered, he sent word to Topham and the latter hurried to his side.

"I've got the *Southern Cross*," he announced.

"Good! Tell him who we are. Have him notify the Captain that I wish to come aboard him and ask for his position and course and speed."

The operator's fingers played over the key. Soon he stopped and noted the reply upon a blank sheet of paper.

Topham called an orderly and sent the note to Quentin, asking him to lay his course accordingly. Then he turned back to the wireless operator.

"Ask him whether Miss Lillian Byrd is on board?" he said.

Promptly came an affirmative answer.

"Please tell her that Lieutenant Topham of the Navy will be alongside in about half an hour to take her ashore and ask her to be ready for transfer. Tell the Captain that Mr. Topham apologizes for the trouble he is giving, but that the matter is imperative."

The operator tapped off the message. "He's gone to deliver them, sir," he explained. "He'll call again in a few minutes."

But more than a few minutes elapsed before the *Southern Cross* again made herself heard. In fact, the "Light ho!" of the lookout at the bow of the *Watson* was sounding before the call came again.

For an instant the operator listened; then he snatched up his pencil and began to write. Topham, looking over his shoulder, read the words:

Miss Byrd can not be found. Was on board at nine o'clock. Count of Ouro Preto, another passenger, has also vanished. No trace of either found.

"Good God! Ask him if they have no idea what has become of them!"

Again the operator wrote:

Suspect Ouro Preto carried girl off. His yacht been following us all the way from Barbados. He sent a code wireless to her last night. Saw her lights close behind us an hour ago.

In silent consternation Topham read the message. It confirmed his instant guess

Digitized by Google

as to what had happened. To keep his secret Ouro Preto had snatched the girl from under the President's very fingers. Just how he managed it was not of import, except as concerned the welfare of the girl herself and Topham was very sure by now that more important things were at stake than the fate even of Lillian Byrd.

What should he do? What could he do? In what quarter of the sea should he seek for the fleeing yacht?

Suddenly the operator began to write again. "Somebody's breaking in," he explained. "Not the *Southern Cross;* somebody else." The message ran:

Heard you talking. This is the yacht *Wind Bird*. Ouro Preto just came aboard bringing Miss Byrd with him. We are due south of *Southern Cross*, going east. Will try to keep you advised. But can't say much or I'll excite suspicion. Follow.—Rutile.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ABDUCTION

LILLIAN BYRD kept in her cabin most of the day after she had sent her despatch to the *Gazette*.

She knew that Ouro Preto would not consider her last words final, but would urge her to change them. She felt that he had a powerful influence over her and she could be sure of herself only when it was out of her power to acceed to his wishes. Later she felt really afraid to face him.

Lillian was not ordinarily a coward and after a day's reflection the situation grew intolerable to her and she determined to give the Count an opportunity to bring matters to a focus.

Evening saw her upon the deck in the selfsame spot where he had found her the evening before—waiting.

She looked aft across the water to where the three lights of Ouro Preto's yacht had burned night after night, and noted that they were closer than she had ever seen them before. Little by little the decks had grown empty as the passengers had slipped away to more congenial occupations than watching the white boiling spume of the wake and listening to the swish of the waves along the steamer's sides. For all that Lillian could see she was alone.

Four bells struck and still the Count had not come.

When he did come at last she was in the mood for combat rather than apology.

He bowed as he came up and wished her a good evening.

"I have come for my answer," he said, with a tremor in his voice. "Will you give it to me?"

"Your answer?"

"Yes! But surely! I asked you to marry me last night and you ran away without answering. Ah, señorita, you do not know what this day has been to me! One moment I hope, the next I despair. I love you, señorita! Will you not say that you too love me?"

"But—but—" she gasped, "the Emperor! Your great plot! You—all of it!"

Ouro Preto stared. Then he laughed gently. "*Por dios, señorita!*" he cried. "Have you not forgotten that—that bombast?"

"Bombast?"

"But yes!" He waved his hand airily. "Nothing more! Waste no more thought over it. It is gone. But you remain—you and I! Will you not think of my suit? Ah, señorita, if you but understood how I love you!"

But Lillian shook her head. "I can not forget it," she declared, stubbornly, refusing to be diverted. "I can not forget it. I wish I could. I am ashamed that I should have imposed upon you as I did. I could almost wish that you had not told me, but now that you have done so, I can not forget and I can not keep it secret. In fact, I must tell you that I have already——"

The Count flung up his hands. "No, No! Think once more, señorita!" he pleaded.

"I can not. I have——"

"Then, señorita, I must take other measures. I have given you every chance and you have refused. Now—now!"

The man did not even raise his voice. In exactly the same tones as those he had been using, he repeated his last word "Now!"

Vaguely uneasy; fearing she knew not what, Lillian started to rise. But before she could do so, a towel, saturated with some heavy-smelling stuff, was flung over her face from behind and her head was drawn suddenly back. Vainly she tried to scream; the muffling towel was too thick. She gasped for breath, plucking with futile fingers at the bandage. Then her brain reeled and darkness came over her.

Ouro Preto stood silent, quietly watch-

Digitized by Google

ing her struggles. When at last she lay still he spoke in a low tone to the sailor who held her.

"Loosen the towel a little and give her air," he ordered. "I don't want to suffocate her."

As the man obeyed, the Count stepped to the taffrail, lifted the rear light of the steamer from its box and swung it in wide wagon-wheel convolutions. From out of the waters behind him a white sword of light sprang up and cleft the zenith. Right and left it wheeled, cutting fantastic zigzags across the milky way, but never by any chance falling upon the *Southern Cross*.

His yacht had hung on the heels of the ship all the way from Barbados and those upon the steamer had ceased to pay attention to her. On that particular night she had closed in until scarcely an eighth of a mile of smooth rolling water separated the two vessels. When the searchlight sprang up, the officers on the *Southern Cross* watched it for a moment and then turned to more important things.

Meanwhile Ouro Preto was busy. From a rack above his head he took two life-preservers; one he bound around himself and the other he handed to his confederate to fasten around Miss Byrd's unconscious form.

"Come along," he ordered, turning to the starboard quarter, whence a trailing rope ladder depended, its lower end just touching the crest of the waves as they rolled past.

He climbed over the rail and took a step or two down the swaying ladder. "Give me the girl!" he ordered.

But the man held back. "Say, Mister," he protested. "I ain't standing for murder!"

Ouro Preto glared at him. "Neither am I, you fool!" he snarled. "It's all arranged. I can swim like a fish and my yacht will pick us up in less than five minutes. See how near she is."

The man looked up. The yacht was indeed very near.

"Give me the girl," ordered the Count again. The sailor obeyed.

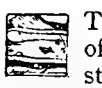
Ouro Preto balanced Lillian over his shoulder and descended the ladder step by step. When he reached the water's edge he stopped.

"Swing the light around your head twice," he called softly.

The sailor obeyed and instantly the yacht's searchlight crept along the water until it rested with sudden brilliancy on the stern of the *Southern Cross*, where Ouro Preto clung to the ladder with Lillian in his arms.

For only an instant he clung; then he descended the last two or three steps of the ladder and, when the next wave came, let go his hold and dropped upon its crest.

The fall carried the two beneath the surface, but the life-preservers brought them up again as quickly as a bobbing cork. In the interval, brief as it was, the *Southern Cross* had drawn away. The Count could see her stern-light rapidly lessening in the distance. The yacht's searchlight came and went, sweeping over him often enough to prevent his being lost in the waters, but not often enough to attract attention from the *Southern Cross*.



THEN Lillian revived with the shock of the chill water. Bewildered, she struggled to free herself from the Count, and he let her go for an instant, only to grasp her life-belt again as a wave tried to force them apart.

"It's all right, Miss Byrd," he declared. "It's all right. Don't be frightened."

But Lillian would not heed. "Help! Help!" she screamed, across the water.

Ouro Preto made no effort to check her. "It is of no use, señorita," he declared simply. "The *Southern Cross* is much too far away."

Miss Byrd gripped at her sinking courage. She realized that she was not drowning and she tried desperately to calm herself. "How dare you?" she choked. "How dare you?"

The Count shrugged his shoulders. "I had to," he explained. "I could not let you wreck the plan of years. Believe me, señorita, it grieves me to the heart to use such means as these. I love you and——"

"Love!"

"Yes, love! You may not believe it. I can not blame you if you do not, but it is true. And, señorita, have no fear. We will be on my yacht in a few minutes and you will be as safe then as you were on the *Southern Cross*. I will release you very soon—as soon as safety will allow—probably within two weeks. But I can not have the knowledge of my plans reach Washington just now!"

Lillian was no longer frightened. The circling searchlight flashed across her face

Digitized by Google

and very close at hand she heard the noise of oars in rowlocks. Besides, she was choking with rage, and rage had driven out fear.

It was on the tip of her tongue to tell the Count that his action was vain; that his plans had already been wirelessed to land and had very probably been printed broadcast. How she could exult over him! But on second thoughts she held her tongue. She knew instinctively that he would not under any circumstances restore her to the steamer from which he had taken her. Perhaps he could not do so even if he would and she felt sure that he would not if he could.

If her despatch was generally known, their disappearance from the *Southern Cross* would be understood and steps would be taken for her rescue. To tell him would merely be to warn him and cause him to take precautions that might lessen her chances of early freedom.

Ouro Preto had been watching her face in silence. "Well?" he questioned.

Lillian shrugged her shoulders. "Well," she replied, "since I can't help myself, I yield for the time being. But I warn you that you will have to pay all of this outrage some day."

The Count leaned forward. "I am ready to pay now," he cried eagerly; "to pay with all I have. Marry me and——"

"No thank you! Change the subject, please! How did you get me away from the steamer?"

Ouro Preto spread out his hands. "Very easily," he explained. "I carry much gold. The man on watch at the steamer's quarter wanted it, and so—oh, it was easy. But"—he looked up—"señorita, here is the boat."

At full speed the boat came slopping alongside. Two of the sailors dropped their oars and lifted the girl aboard and an instant later Ouro Preto clambered in beside her. Two minutes later both were on board the *Windbird*.

As Lillian, dripping and bedraggled, but unconquered, went to her cabin, she and the wireless operator met face to face. For one breathless instant she hesitated; then the latter lifted his cap and stepped aside.

"Pardon, Fraülein," he said.

Miss Byrd bowed in acknowledgment and passed on. But she had recognized Rutile and knew that she had a friend at hand.

CHAPTER XVII

THE RESCUE FROM THE *WINDBIRD*

THROUGH the night, full speed, with all the lights extinguished, ran the *Watson*, her only guide the information contained in Rutile's brief and indefinite message over the wireless. If this were correct—if the yacht had indeed run due east for half an hour and if she should continue in the same direction and at the same speed, and if her speed were about eighteen knots an hour—as it probably was—it was a mere matter of calculation to determine where and when the *Watson* would overtake her.

Swiftly moments sped by and steadily the destroyer ate up the miles supposed to intervene between her and the yacht. No further signals were received and Topham, not knowing what conditions might be on the *Windbird*, or who might read off any message that he might send flying through the dark, forebore to call, despite Quentin's advice to take the chance.

He yielded only when the *Watson* had reached the spot where calculations placed the yacht.

"I guess you'd better call Rutile, Mr. Quentin," he ordered. "We'll be passing them the first thing we know."

Quentin was about to give the order when the operator suddenly began to write.

He scribbled the words as they came to him through the night.

Do you hear me? Answer if you do.

"I hear," tapped the operator. Then came:

Am using reduced power. Been ordered to call *H. I. M. Kaiserland*, supposed to be somewhere near. Can see light from somebody's funnels and suspect it's yours or hers. If it's yours you are due north of us, mighty near.

Topham leaped for the companionway. "South by east, Mr. Quentin!" he ordered. "Half speed. Keep sharp lookout. We're close on her."

"Tell him that," he ordered, turning back to the operator.

He sent the message:

O. K. We're running down on you.

Then came the answer:

Good ! Hurry. You don't want the *Kaiserland* to beat you to it. She's an armored cruiser.

Digitized by Google

Quentin bent over the cabin skylight. "Saw her funnels flash just now," he cried excitedly. "How about the searchlight?"

"Turn it on her."

Topham leaped on deck. As he did so the broad white sword of the searchlight flashed through the darkness, lighting up the rolling water and picking out the *Windbird*, black against the night, scarce a cable-length away. The blinding light showed her every detail—showed her masts and funnels and the white tracery of her rigging, silvered the edges of the black smoke that trailed away behind her, and showed, too, her half-dozen rapid-fire guns, with their crews manned and ready.

"Hail them! Say you'll send a boat!" ordered Topham.

Quentin flung up his megaphone. "*Windbird*, ahoy!" he bellowed. "Heave to! I'll send a boat aboard you."

As the words left his lips the yacht's searchlight flashed out and lighted up the bulk of the destroyer, long and low, far less formidable to all appearances than the yacht.

A man on the bridge raised his megaphone. "Who are you?" he demanded.

"That's Ouro Preto talking," commented Topham, staring through his glasses.

"The United States Destroyer *Watson*. Heave to!" ordered Quentin.

"Go to ——!"

Topham's face flushed. "Easy, Mr. Quentin," he cautioned. "Warn him once more."

"For the last time, heave to, or I'll fire into you!" shouted Quentin.

Back came the answer. "Fire if you dare!"

Quentin lowered the megaphone. His eyes glittered and his breast swelled with unholy joy. "It's up to us!" he suggested.

"Send a shot between his masts," ordered Topham. "It may bring him to his senses."

"*Crack!*" The spiteful snap of the aft six-pounder thrilled through the night, and Topham saw the men on the yacht duck as the projectile whistled above their heads.

The next instant Ouro Preto's voice, crazy with rage, rose. "Fire! Fire!" he yelled.

But the crew did not fire. Ready as most of them were to take the risks of battle with the Brazilian Government, they were not ready to fire upon a United States ship.

Still the yacht swept on.

"I'll put the next shot through your pilot-house!" megaphoned Quentin. "Be warned. Train on the pilot-house!" he ordered, in tones loud enough to reach the yacht.

"Ay, Ay, sir!" The gunners bent to their piece, but before they could fire the door of the pilot-house of the *Windbird* flew open and a man, ducking low, ran out. Instantly the yacht, uncontrolled, swung off into the trough of the waves.

"You —— cowards!" Ouro Preto's voice was almost unintelligible with rage. He snatched up a rifle and flung it to his shoulder, but some one knocked up his arm and the bullet whistled harmlessly away.

Quentin's voice sounded. "Heave to!" he ordered calmly.

THE yacht's engine-bells answered, and the *Windbird* lost way. Instantly the *Watson* followed suit, sheering inward. Closer they came and closer until the destroyer poked her sharp nose under the yacht's overhanging quarter and Topham caught the trailing Jacob's ladder and climbed over the rail to her deck.

Ouro Preto faced him. "What does this—this piracy mean?" he demanded.

Topham took no notice of the words. He could afford to ignore them. Besides, Ouro Preto was "her" brother. Politely he saluted.

"I am instructed by the President of the United States to bring him the young lady whom you kidnaped to-night. Kindly produce her!"

"I won't do it!"

Topham shrugged his shoulders. "Then I shall be compelled to take you into port on a charge of piracy," he said distinctly.

Ouro Preto shook with the fury that possessed him. The hopes of years were crumbling before his eyes.

"You have no right!" he clamored. "This is a German vessel——"

"Your pardon. She was once a Brazilian ship, but she has forfeited her rights by engaging in rebellion against Brazil. She is now an outlaw—her last act was that of a pirate. Do not force me to take her into port on that charge."

Ouro Preto glared for a moment. But before he could utter the defiance that was on the end of his tongue, a feminine voice broke in.

"Good evening, Mr. Topham!" it said sweetly. "You've come in good time." Lillian Byrd stood smiling by, with Rutile be-

Digitized by Google

side her. As all eyes were turned on her, she went on: "Mr. Rutile let me out of the stateroom where the Count had locked me. You didn't know Mr. Rutile was on board, did you, Count?"

Helplessly Ouro Preto stared from one to the other. "Rutile!" he gasped. "You here?"

Rutile nodded. "Sure thing," he remarked genially. "Been on board for a month. Wireless operator, you know. Sorry, but the game's up, old man. It is really!"

"One moment!" A man whom no one had seen before stepped quickly into the middle of the group. Behind him stood half a dozen sailors.

Gravely he saluted. "Whom have I the honor of addressing?" he demanded, looking at Topham.

Topham returned the salute. "I am Lieutenant Topham of the United States Navy," he answered, taking in the newcomer's uniform as he did so. "And you, mein Herr?"

"I am Commander Metternich, of His Imperial Majesty's ship *Kaiserland*. Captain Vreeland of the *Kaiserland* learned, through intercepted wireless messages, that the operator on this ship is a traitor. He therefore hastened here and sent me on board to demand his surrender. No one seemed to observe my arrival and I took the liberty of listening for a moment. What I have heard convinces me that the case is not so simple as I thought. I, therefore, take possession of this ship as a prize of his Imperial Majesty. The *Kaiserland* will escort her to Hamburg. If you so desire, sir, you may accompany her."

Before the last word had fallen from the German's lips, Topham stepped between him and Rutile. "Look sharp!" he hissed to the American. Then, facing the German, he flung out his hand. "I'm delighted to hear you, Commander," he declared. "Delighted! Frankly, I didn't know what to do with the yacht, which is clearly little better than a pirate, but your action solves everything. I can't tell you how much I thank you."

As he spoke, Topham pressed forward, crowding Metternich backward, apparently merely by excess enthusiasm. The latter gave way for a moment, though clearly bewildered by the American's sudden excess of friendliness.

Suddenly a warning cry rang out. "Stop them! Quick!" yelled Ouro Preto. "He's fooling you!"

The Brazilian was right. As Topham grasped the officer's hand Rutile caught Lillian by the arm and darted with her toward the rail, only half a dozen feet away, beyond which lay the *Watson*. The German sailors sprang to intercept them, but Rutile, leaving Lillian to scramble over by herself, turned at bay and struck out savagely twice. Then, before he could be grasped, he vaulted over the side to the deck of the destroyer.

Metternich saw it all over Topham's shoulder and, with a cry of rage, he tried to jerk free from the American's grasp. But Topham laughed and chattered on for a moment longer. Then, releasing the man he sprang back to the rail.

The crew of the *Watson*, arms in hand were swarming up the sides to his rescue, but he waved them back. One of the German sailors was about to spring down, but Topham caught him by the shoulders and flung him aside. Then he threw up his hand.

"Stop!" he thundered.

A pause followed, brief but sufficient. Topham did not let it slip.

"Call back your men, Commander!" he ordered sternly. "Are you mad?"

THE German hesitated. Angry as he was at the trick, he realized the consequences of forcibly boarding a warship of a friendly nation. To do so would mean war, or, if the Emperor did not want war, it would mean disgrace for himself. He was only a subordinate, though an able one, and he had no reason to suppose that Wilhelm did want war. Besides, his force, though perhaps sufficient to prevent an escape was clearly not enough for a recapture. Finally he sheathed the sword he had drawn. "You will wait here until I consult Captain Vreeland," he declared positively.

But Topham only laughed. "Your pardon, Commander," he said. "I have been delayed too long already. Good-night!"

Courteously he lifted his cap; then, turning, he climbed slowly over the side of the yacht down to the deck of the *Watson*.

As he went, Metternich caught up a megaphone and bellowed a torrent of guttural German across the waters toward the

Digitized by Google

Kaiserland. Topham did not hear the answer that came back, for, the moment he had touched the deck of the Watson, she glided away into the night.

CHAPTER XVIII

RUTILE EXPLAINS

WHEN the night had swallowed up both the yacht and the cruiser, Topham drew a long breath and turned to Lillian.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed boyishly, "what a yarn this would make for the *Gazette* if you could only print it."

Lillian bubbled toward him. "Mayn't I?" she asked plaintively, but as one who knew the answer already.

But Topham laughed. "Not a word," he said. "The situation is too ticklish. Do you know, young woman, that your respected chief, Mr. Vorst, thought it so serious that he brought your despatch to Washington and showed it to the President without publishing it—to the President, mind you? Your chief and the President! It took something mighty serious to bring those two together. Do you know that the United States and Germany were on the brink of war to-night?"

Lillian nodded. "I suppose so," she answered seriously, "I suppose, too, that that German officer will have trouble over letting us get away."

Topham nodded, but before he could speak Rutile struck in. "No," he said. "I think not. His Captain may give him a wigging, but it's nothing to what the Kaiser would have done to him if he had gone a little too far. Wilhelm doesn't want war. He's merely bluffing."

"But——" Topham was amazed.

"Yes, I know. But things are not just as you would suppose. I've had a month's time and first-class opportunities to learn the ins and outs of the whole conspiracy. If we can go below and sit down, I'll try to explain just what I think Wilhelm was after."

In a few minutes the party was sitting around the table in Quentin's cabin. Rutile leaned across it.

"I suppose you want to know how I came to be aboard Ouro Preto's boat," he remarked. "Briefly, it was in consequence of a letter that Miss Byrd here sent me from Brazil. Ouro Preto was running guns and ammunition from Hamburg to Brazil to aid the rebellion that he had stirred up down there. I took long chances and joined the yacht as a wireless operator.

"So much for me. Now, the situation is just this. Germany wants colonies, and would prefer Southern Brazil if she can get it. She is building dreadnoughts supposedly to make her equal to England but that make her much more nearly a rival to the United States. She is also—but I haven't heard any very recent news—Is she by any chance intriguing in Japan?"

"She is," replied Topham grimly.

"I suspected so. Well, here's the situation. Wilhelm wants Brazil. Ouro Preto, half a German and son of the richest and most influential man in Southern Brazil, wants a German dukedom. Wilhelm says, 'All right! Earn it if you want it. Go back to Brazil. Start something in the three southern states. I will help you with arms and officers and munitions. Make good and I'll recognize their independence. Then let them ask me to annex them. You've got 1,000,000 Germans down there. They won't object. Do this and you will get your dukedom!'"

Miss Byrd nodded. "That's about true," she said. "The Count showed me a letter from the Emperor saying that when South Brazil became a German colony he would make Ouro Preto Duke of Hochstein."

"But," objected Topham. "The Monroe Doctrine——"

"Tush! The Monroe Doctrine is to protect American republics against European conquest. What's it got to do with voluntary annexations?"

Topham knitted his brows. "Of course you are right," he said, "as to the original meaning of the Monroe Doctrine. But the meaning has changed. For our own sakes we must keep Europe away from our doors. I judge the Doctrine would be held to apply."

"You judge!" Rutile snorted. "You *judge!* You are not by any means certain, but after splitting a few hairs, you *judge* it would apply! Well, how do you suppose our millions of German-Americans would judge?"

"Why! They——"

"I'm not saying anything against German-Americans; I'm one of them myself. If it comes to fighting, they'll fight, even

Digitized by Google

against the fatherland. But they won't want to fight Germany. They're mighty apt to say, *'Mein Gott! Vas ist loss mit der* Dagoes that we should go to war for them, ain't it?"

"And if the German-Americans did want to fight, what would the rich men say—the fellows who have trade to lose? Don't you know they'd say, 'To Hades with Brazil. We sell more to Germany in a minute than we do to Brazil in a year!' And so it would go. When it came down to a count of noses, you'd find about the only people that wanted to fight to keep the new republic down in South Brazil from following their twisted noses into the German fold would be you navy fellows and a few chaps whom the papers would call jingoes. And if Germany had a fleet as powerful as the United States, and if the United States had other foreign complications on its hands—with Japan if you like—how many people would insist on fighting to save a lot of Greasers who didn't want to be saved. Now, do you begin to see?"

Topham nodded. He saw it all. Yet he ventured one more objection, not because he put much faith in it, but because he wanted to hear Rutile's answer.

"But," he said, "suppose the people of the new republic should not want to be annexed?" he began. "Suppose they wanted to remain independent?"

"Bosh! Much the people would have to say about it! The leaders would decide and by the time the people waked up, Germany would be in possession. Wilhelm has got the leaders, body and soul; you can bet on that. This isn't the first time he's tried it, you know, but it's different to-day."

"And Japan?"

"Japan! Oh, what does Germany care about Japan? It can fight or funk as it pleases when the time comes, if only it will make faces until Germany gets settled in South America. There are more ways of getting chestnuts out of the fire than burning your own fingers—and Wilhelm knows every one of them."

"But what is to be done?"

"Done? Smash the rebellion in Brazil before Wilhelm can recognize it! Send a fleet to aid Brazil to blockade her southern coast and cut off the supplies that Germany is sending. Well, that isn't your part nor mine. Our part was to get the information. We've got it."

CHAPTER XIX

AT THE WHITE HOUSE

AT ELEVEN o'clock the next morning, Topham, Rutile and Miss Byrd were ushered into the presence of the President. No train had been convenient and the *Watson* had brought them all the way to Washington. Her coming had been wired ahead and an automobile had been waiting to rush them to the White House.

One by one, the President heard their stories, his square jaw growing squarer and squarer as he listened.

When at last the stories had been finished, he nodded. "Among you," he said, "you seem to have got the thing down pretty fine. What you have told me to-day confirms what I felt sure of yesterday after I had heard the story Lieutenant Topham brought from San Francisco and had read the despatch Miss Byrd sent from the *Southern Cross*. Mr. Rutile's information welds it all and makes its inferences unmistakable. Now that I know, I can checkmate my great and good friend across the water. In fact, I have checkmated him already."

The President turned to his Secretary. "Have you a copy of to-day's New York *Gazette?*" he asked.

The Secretary handed him a paper and he reached it out to Topham. "I suppose you haven't seen the papers to-day. Read it aloud, please."

Topham read:

"It is officially announced that the President has decided to send the entire Atlantic fleet on a cruise to the Pacific coast. Sixteen battle-ships will leave Hampton Roads in a few weeks and will steam southward around Cape Horn to San Francisco. They will probably make an extended stop at Rio Janeiro and other ports in Brazil. It is hoped and believed that the present rebellion in Southern Brazil will be at an end by the time the fleet reaches there. Three vessels of the present South Atlantic squadron will cruise along the coast of South Brazil until the fleet arrives, when they will come northward if all is quiet in South America. Then the battleship squadron will go on to San Francisco and perhaps across the Pacific to Japan."

There was silence for a moment as Topham ceased. Then the President turned to Rutile. "Well, Mr. Rutile," he smiled, "will that serve?"

"Serve? It will knock the rebellion endways, quiet Japan and smash the Kaiser's

Digitized by Google

plot. And all without firing a shot!" Rutile paused; his feelings were infinitely too deep for words.

"Glad you approve," sniggered the President. "I understand that Germany's plans depend wholly on the preliminary success of the Brazilian rebellion. If the despatch of the fleet crushes the rebellion, as I feel assured that it will, it ends the whole conspiracy. Further, Mr. Topham, I cabled your report on the San Francisco riot to our Ambassador in Japan last night. A reply has just come stating that the Japanese Ambassador here will be recalled and another sent in his place. The inference is that they consider that he was behind the Countess del Ouro Preto in her plot and wish to disavow it. Meanwhile, until the new Ambassador arrives, all claims against the United States will be dropped.

"This, of course, is confidential. I may add, though—what you will see in the afternoon papers—that the Governor and the leaders of the California Legislature are going to be more conciliatory and avoid giving needless offense to Japan. Also the mayor of San Francisco has promised to prevent any more anti-Japanese riots. So I think everything is about straightened out.

"Now, gentlemen, I'm not going to thank you for what you have done. You have done your duty, neither more nor less. But I am going to tell you that I am delighted to know of two—no, three—people who are as clever and as capable and as courageous as yourselves. And I'll add that I am going to use you all to the extent of your abilities—not as a reward but simply because you are too good not to be used. I guess we can find a post as minister somewhere for you, Mr. Rutile. Please consult with the Secretary of State about it. Mr. Topham——"

But Miss Byrd interrupted. "*Place aux dames*, Mr. President!" she cried. "What do I get?"

"What do you want, Miss Byrd?"

"I want three months' leave for Mr. Rutile. You see he wants to get married and he's too bashful to tell you!"

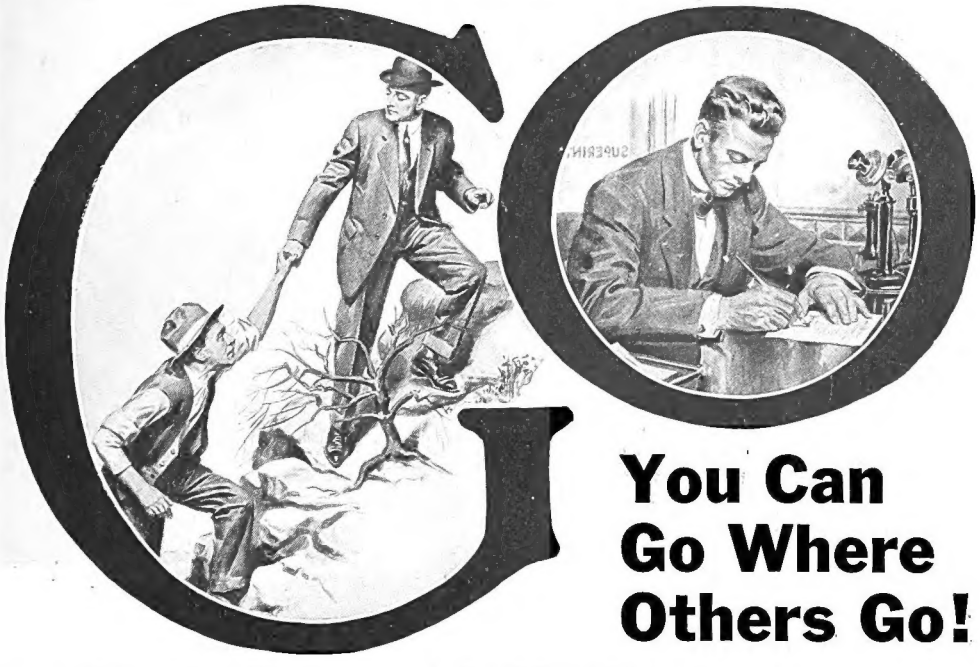
The President's eyes twinkled. "Oh ho! So that's it, is it, Mr. Rutile?" he asked.

Rutile blushed. "Yes! That's it, Mr. President," he admitted.

"Journalism will lose an ornament, but diplomacy will gain one. Mr. Rutile shall have his vacation by all means, Miss Byrd."

"Now, Mr. Topham, I have some news for you. It—or rather she—is waiting in the next room. The Countess del Ouro Preto came to see me this morning. She had read the news about the fleet in the papers. She came to confess, and to tell me a secret or two about yourself. Ahem! You have my permission to go, Mr. Topham! Through the right door yonder. Yes, that's it! Good morning, Mr. Topham!"

Digitized by Google



You Can Go Where Others Go!

THE only difficult part of GOING UP is in making up your mind to START.

You may be working under such circumstances that advance seems impossible, but YOU CAN GO UP. You may now have a fairly good position, but you can go still higher. Just follow the example set by thousands of I. C. S. students who have made good and are making good. Every month an average of over 400 students of the International Correspondence Schools voluntarily report an increase in their earnings.

These are not exceptional cases. There are thousands of them. The I. C. S. will tell you who they are and where they are.

Architects, Engineers, Electricians, Designers, Draftsman, Inventors have been and are students of the I. C. S. Large employers of labor regard I. C. S. training as proof of ability.

With all this evidence, do you doubt its power to help you?

If you do, here is an offer to prove it. Mark and mail the coupon at once, and the I. C. S. will send you more evidence. If you are not perfectly satisfied you are under no obligations to proceed further.

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
Box 884 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

Automobile Running	Civil Service
Mine Superintendent	Architect
Mine Foreman	Chemist
Plumbing, Steam Fitting	Languages: Spanish, French, German, Italian
Concrete Construction	Commercial English
Civil Engineer	Building Contractor
Textile Manufacturing	Architectural Draftsman
Stationary Engineer	Industrial Designing
Telephone Expert	Commercial Illustrating
Mechan. Engineer	Window Trimming
Mechanical Draftsman	Show Card Writing
Electrical Engineer	Advertising Man
Elec. Lighting Supt.	Stenographer
Agriculture	Bookkeeper
Electric Railways	Cotton Manufacturing
Structural Engineer	Woolen Manufacturing
R. R. Construction	Toolmaking
Metal Mining	Foundry Work
English Branches	Pattern Making
Gas Engineer	Blacksmithing
Foreman Plumber	Surveyor
	Poultry Farming

Name _____

Present Occupation _____

Street and No. _____

City _____ State _____

Digitized by Google

The Columbia Phonograph Company presents:

REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.

Photos (c) by Mishkin & Dupont

an unequalled series of Double-Disc Records by a majority of the ***greatest*** singers in the world, artists whose names are household words in Europe and both Americas—among them

[1]DUDICA, [2]FREMSTAD, [3]MARY GARDEN, [4]ALICE NIELSEN, [5]ZENATELLO,
[6]BONCI, [7]CAVALIERI, [8]CONSTANTINO, [9]LIPKOWSKA, [10]BAKLANOFF, [11]AMATO,
[12]McCORMACK, [13]BONINSEGNA, [14]EMMY DESTINN, [15]SAMMARCO, [16]ANSELMI, [17]MARDONES

RECORDS of all these magnificent voices, and of scores of others, may be purchased of ***Columbia*** dealers. Many of them ***nowhere else;*** for they are now singing under exclusive ***Columbia*** contracts; records that may be played on any disc instrument, and are better in surface, tone and durability than any others, *and so guaranteed to you.*

Hear them on the new Columbia Grafonola "Regent Junior," here illustrated, and you will admit the claims of "the one incomparable musical instrument."

New catalogs of Columbia instruments and records of any Columbia dealer, or from us by mail.

Exclusive selling rights granted to dealers where we are not actively represented.

COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, Gen'l

Box 279 Tribune Building, :: :: New York

London: Earlsfield, S. W.

The New Columbia Grafonola "Regent Junior"—$150

Other types of the Columbia Grafonola from $50 up to $200.

Graphophones, $17.50 to $100

Digitized by Google